SHAH ALAM II AND HIS COURT

A NARRATIVE OF THE TRANSACTIONS AT THE COURT OF DELHY FROM THE YEAR 1771 TO THE PRESENT TIME

By

ANTOINE LOUIS HENRI POLIER

Edited with an Introduction, Notes and Appendices by
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By P. C. Gupta

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TO THE MEMORY OF
PROFESSOR H. H. DODWELL

PREFACE

In the nineteenth century manuscripts and books were often presented to learned Societies and libraries in India by servants of the East India Company returning home after retirement. Some books of Indian history in the Imperial Library, Calcutta, bear stamps of the library of Fort William and names of previous owners. It occurred to me that old manuscripts might have similarly found their way to the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. About four years ago, a search was made and a box which evidently had not been opened for a long time was found to contain a number of manuscripts on various subjects. One such manuscript which I hoped might be used as a source for the history of north India during Shah Alam II's reign, is published.

In Buckland's *Dictionary of Indian Biography* there is a short sketch of Antoine Louis Henri Polier's career in India. There is a fuller account in a recently published volume of Hodson's *Officers of the Bengal Army*. For obvious reasons Polier does not find a place in *Dictionary of National Biography*, but it is a pity that he has been left out by Philippart. There is, however, a short biographical sketch in the *Bengal Past and Present*, 1910. Occasional mention of Polier will also be found in Grier's *Letters of Warren Hastings to his Wife*, Hodges' *Travels in India*, Rennel's *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan*, Broome's *History of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Army* and Forrest's *Life of Clive*. In recent years, a number of articles appeared in the *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*. When this book was ready for the press, Colonel Phillimore's *Historical Records of the Survey of India* was brought out. It contains an interesting note based on official records and Polier's autobiography published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, 1818.

In print, old spellings of the manuscript are retained. It will be seen that some proper names are spelt in more than one way. But the very frequent use of capital letters had to be discouraged and some liberty taken with the punctuation in order to make sense. The biographical sketch of Polier in the Introduction has been prepared mainly from materials in the Archives of the Government of India. All documents referred to in this volume are from the Imperial Record Department, New Delhi, unless otherwise stated.

I am grateful to the Council of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal for permitting me to edit the manuscript. I owe thanks for facilities and help to Dr. S. N. Sen, Director of Archives, Government of India and Mr. H. N. Randle, Librarian, India Office. I am also indebted to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Sir Patrick Cadell, Professor Somnath Maitra, Dr. N. K. Sinha, Mr. Sourindranath Roy and Mr. Nirmal Chandra Sinha. Mr. N. N. Das Gupta has very kindly helped me in seeing the book through the press.

P. C. G.

125, Rashbihari Avenue, Calcutta,
8 April, 1947.

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ILLUSTRATION



1786 Zoffany

Colonel Mordaunt's Cock-fight

Polier is seen marked with a cross

INTRODUCTION

In the library of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal there is an English manuscript on the Delhi Empire and Court during the reign of Shah Alam II. It is called "A Narrative of the transactions of the Court of Delhy", and covers nine years of Shah Alam's life from 1771 when he left Allahabad to 1779 when the deputy Wazir Abdul Ahad Khan led an expedition against the Sikhs. The volume containing this manuscript includes copies of other documents of a miscellaneous nature. It is marked as No. 4387. It is now almost impossible to say what this number indicates.

The manuscript is obviously a copy, but from the dates of the other documents it does not seem to be a very late one. The latest document which is included in the volume is of the year 1791. It is not difficult to ascertain when the manuscript on Shah Alam II's Court was originally written. The date "Delhy, 15 August, 1779", which appears at the top of the document evidently indicates the time when it was completed. This is further substantiated by the fact that the last incident reported in the manuscript is Abdul Ahad Khan's campaign against the Sikhs which began in July 1779. The manuscript does not bear the name of the author. But there are certain clear indications. It does not read like an official report and the author is always free with his opinion and criticism. One cannot miss the intimate nature of the narrative. It was obviously written by one who was personally acquainted with the men and things he wrote about, and it is not unlikely that he might have played some part in the story he related.

When I first came across the manuscript I found it of unusual interest. I showed it to Sir Jadunath Sarkar and sent a copy of it to Dr. S. N. Sen, Director of Archives to Government of India. Sir Jadunath Sarkar reported to the Asiatic Society that it was written by Antoine Louis Henri Polier, a Swiss Engineer in the service of the East India Company. The manuscript, he considered, "gives a very true account and is far more detailed about the Court

intrigues than any Persian or Marathi account" known to him. Dr. Sen informed me that as it was not an official document, the original would not be found in the Imperial Record Department and the documents in his custody would not throw any light on its authorship. But he drew my attention to the fifth book of Scott's *Deccan*. It first came out in 1794 and in the preface to the fifth book he states, "for the account of the situation of the present Emperor Shah Aulum from 1771 to 1779, I owe the chief materials to my friend Lieutenant Colonel Polier whose long residence and connection at the Court of Delhy enabled him to obtain the best information of public and private transactions". A comparison of Scott's chapter on Shah Alam II with the Royal Asiatic Society manuscript shows remarkable similarity of language and expression between the two. Many of the phrases which occur in both the works are the same and often Scott merely summarises from the manuscript. The Asiatic Society manuscript undoubtedly formed "the chief materials" furnished by Polier on which Scott built up his account of Shah Alam II.

Polier's name is not very familiar to students of Indian History, but some of his writings are fairly well-known. His letters were published in the *Asiatic Annual Register* of 1800, and later on reprinted in the *Bengal Past and Present* of 1914. A few of his manuscripts form part of the Orme collection in the India Office Library. Hill's catalogue of the Orme collection (vol. ii, pt. i, pp. 138-39) mentions (*i*) "Some account of the celebrated adventurer Sombre or Sumroo"; (*ii*) "A view of the present situation of the Emperor Shah Allum and the territories round Delhy remaining in his possession"; (*iii*) "Some account of the transactions in the province of Oud from the 1st April to the end of June 1776"; and (*iv*) "Treaty between the Hon'ble East India Company and the Mahratta State at Poorunder". Hill presumed them to be written by Polier. The first two bear strong resemblance to extracts from Polier's letters to Colonel Ironside dated May 22, 1776, published in the *Asiatic Annual Register* of 1800. Hill also refers to the copy of a manuscript (xix; 10) bearing the same name and date, "possibly by Colonel Polier", which is evidently the same thing as the one in Calcutta. The two copies have been compared and found

to be identical except for those differences which are due to the copyist. One does not know if the original is preserved. It is curious that "A Narrative of transactions in Delhy", which is otherwise a very full account, hardly mentions the siege and capture of Agra by Najaf Khan. It proved a turning point in Polier's career and cost him his job. On several occasions he had written to the Governor-General explaining his conduct and describing the part he played in the siege of Agra. One fails to understand why the whole incident has been dismissed in one bald sentence, "Agra in the interim fell into Nasaf Khan's hands". Polier probably had his own reasons for keeping silent, or he might have mentioned it in the "account of Nasaf Khan" to which he makes several allusions in the present work. The extracts from his letters to Ironside published in the *Asiatic Annual Register* of 1800 contain a section on Najaf Khan. It is not clear if this account is meant, for Polier refers to a distinct narrative and not a letter, and it does not contain any reference to the siege of Agra. It is, however, an extract, and one does not know what portions have been left out.

II

Antoine Louis Polier came of a French Protestant family which had settled down in Switzerland. He entered the service of the East India Company in London in 1757 and next year arrived in India.[1] His uncle Paul Phillipe Polier was also in the service of the Company and became the Commandant of Fort St. George. Towards the end of 1858, he commanded a detachment of the Swiss and died in action against the French near Madras.[2] Antoine Louis Polier served under Forde at Masulipatam and Carnac in

[1] Sec. Pro. 24 Feb. 1775 (10). Some of the dates are difficult to ascertain. In *La France Protestant* by Eugene and Emil Haag he is said to have been born in 1741, and arrived in India in 1756. His autobiographical notes tell us that he landed in India in 1753 at the age of 17, so he was born in 1736. I have relied on a letter written by Polier to the Governor-General, in which he recalls his career. According to it, he arrived in India in 1758. But in it there is no indication when he was born. See *Bengal Past and Present*, 1910, p. 176.

[2] *Bengal Past and Present*, 1910, p. 176; *East India Military Calendar*, ii, p. 42.

Behar.[3] About the end of 1761, he was transferred to Bengal.

As early as May 1757 arrangements were made for the construction of a new fort in Calcutta. Captain John Brohier who was the Chief Engineer in Madras laid out the plan and commenced the work. But his progress was very slow and his methods highly irregular. In 1760, he was charged with defalcation, and pending enquiry kept a prisoner in his own house. But he managed to escape to Ceylon which was then a Dutch settlement and probably settled down there.[4] His post was given to Thomas Amphlett and Captain Polier was appointed his assistant. In October 1762, Amphlett resigned on grounds of health. Polier was placed "in charge of work with instructions to follow the plans already laid down and consult Amphlett if any new work had to be commenced.[5] Polier was also granted a commission as Engineer with the rank of a Captain Lieutenant in the army. For about two years Polier continued as the Chief Engineer and supervised the construction of the fort. He suffered from the same difficulties as his predecessors, and his work was very often held up by lack of men and materials. In his letters to the Council one frequently comes across references to his difficulties in getting supplies and the lack of men which always fell short of the required number.[6] Polier was instructed to follow the original plan, but he introduced certain improvements. In October 1763, he submitted to the Council a plan for a gate "towards the waterside for the easy and speedy landing and shipping of goods from the New Fort".[7] The watergate was apparently a great success. Hodges who came to India in 1780 drew a picture of Calcutta as seen from Fort William with the watergate in the foreground. The fort, Hodges remarked, was "in strength and correctness of design superior to any in India". The watergate was specially mentioned as

[3] Sec. Pro. 24 Feb. 1775 (10).

[4] Long, *Selections from Records*, pp. 159, 215; Hodson, *Officers of Bengal Army*, i, p. 212.

[5] Sec. Pro. 24 Feb. 1775 (10).

[6] Pub. Pro. 20 June 1763, pp. 894-96.

[7] Pub. Pro. 31 Oct. 1763, p. 1306.

reflecting "great honour on the talents of the Engineer—the ingenious Colonel Polier".[8]

Polier's appointment as Chief Engineer seems to have been regarded as a temporary arrangement by the Board of Directors. In the midst of the Anglo-French hostilities the appointment of a man who was half-French in such a responsible post probably seemed inexpedient. In 1764, Captain Fleming Martin was appointed Chief Engineer in Bengal. Polier acted as the Field-Engineer to the army and took part in the siege of Chunar in November 1764.[9] In 1766 he was appointed a Major and helped to quell the mutiny of white troops in Sir Robert Fletcher's brigade at Monghyr.[10] Towards the end of 1767 he was called to Calcutta to take charge of the garrison and superintend and give opinion on the defences of the fort.[11] Polier hoped that he would be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. But as early as 1766 the Court of Directors had already passed an order that "no foreign officer is to be promoted to a higher rank than Major", and Polier learnt that a bar was put to his rank and further promotion was impossible. He made a representation to the Court of Directors and his case was strongly recommended by the Government. But the authorities in Leadenhall Street saw no reason to change their decision and Polier's petition was left unanswered.[12]

About this time Shuja-ud-daulah of Oudh had repeatedly written to the Bengal Government requesting the services of an Engineer. Polier's name was recommended. He entered the service of the Nawab-wazir and was placed in charge of superintending and directing the fortifications and buildings which the Nawab had planned.[13] Polier tells us that he "embraced" this offer with "thankfulness". He felt that it held out a chance of passing his days in tranquility and retire to Europe with a "competent mediocrity, though not with a high mark and such a fortune" as he

[8] Hodges, *Travels in India*, p. 14.
[9] Sec. Cons. 24 Feb. 1775 (10).
[10] *Ibid.;* Forrest, *Life of Lord Clive*, ii, pp. 271, 321-22; Broome, *History of Bengal Army*, pp. 581 ff.
[11] Sec. Cons. 24 Feb. 1775 (10).
[12] *Ibid.;* Hill, *Major General Claud Martin*, pp. 40-41.
[13] *Ibid.; Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, iv, Nos. 184, 1086.

could expect from his former employment.[14] Polier was already slightly acquainted with the Nawab and very soon rose high in royal favour. About this time the French adventurer Claud Martin had resigned from his service and had settled down in Lucknow. It was well known that he had amassed a huge fortune by private trade, particularly by trading in indigo. Polier writes that "with the help of a few friends" he also entered into some mercantile engagements "as the only way left to him for obtaining in a warrantable manner a small independency".[15]

Polier did not have a tranquil life in Oudh as he had expected. In December 1773, soon after he arrived at the Nawab's Court he accompanied the Nawab to Etawah. Najaf Khan was then besieging the fort of Agra which had fallen in the hands of the Jats. Shuja-ud-daulah who was then friendly to Najaf Khan sent two battalions of sepoys and nine guns for his help. The seige took more time than was anticipated and the Nawab's troops seem to have created little impression. The Nawab consequently asked Polier to come to Agra and direct the operations. Polier explained his position thus: "This request considering my station with him in the capacity of an Engineer together with his being a party concerned in the event of the siege, could not with propriety be refused by me, and as a whole month must have elapsed before I could receive an answer from Calcutta on the subject, which delay might have been highly detrimental to his affairs, I hesitated not in complying with his desire, also from a conviction that the Vizier's field operation has the sanction of our administration and accordingly repaired to Agra without loss of time". The circumstances were duly reported to Warren Hastings who was then the Governor of Bengal, and Polier learnt from the Governor's aide-de-camp after his return from Agra that he entirely approved of his conduct.[16]

It should be observed that by this time the Regulating

[14] Sec. Cons. 24 Feb. 1775 (10).

[15] *Ibid.* It appears that Polier had some previous business experiences in Calcutta. Dr. N. K. Sinha tells me that in *Nittyanund Day* vs. *Henry Goodwin* (Mayor's Court Records, Calcutta, 1772), Paramanund Mistri, a witness, testified that "he did about 8 years ago examine a quantity of Alligunge timber . . . belonging to Major Polier. . . ."

[16] Pub. Cons. 14 Sept. 1775 (6).

Act of 1773 had been passed and had resulted in violent quarrels between the Governor-General and the majority of his Council. Warren Hastings' opponents found in Polier's conduct a cause for intervention, and on 30 November, 1774, Clavering, Monson and Francis complained to the Court of Directors that Major Polier who as they "were given to understand by Mr. Hastings, was employed in the Vizier's country on the surveying service only, joined the army under Nudjuff Cawn and had a considerable if not a principal share in the direction of the siege of Agra".[17] They also asked the Governor-General if Polier "had any authority from the late Government for assisting at the siege of Agra", and whether he had communicated any account of his military operations. Hastings was also desired to place before the Board all instructions sent to Polier and all communications received from him.[18] Hastings replied that the members were wrong in supposing that Polier was appointed by the Nawab for surveying work only. In recommending him to the post of the Nawab's Engineer he had only complied with "a request long and repeatedly made by the Vizier for a competent architect and engineer". It had removed the possibility of the appointment of Gentil or other Frenchmen for such posts, and it had furnished "suitable employment for an officer of long service and distinguished merit and abilities" who being a foreigner was prevented "by the standing order of the Company from rising in the service." It was known to the Governor-General that Polier had assisted Najaf Khan in the siege of Agra and he believed he had letters from him on the subject. But he had not the "most distant idea how on account of Polier's conduct the credit or interest of the Company could have suffered any kind of injury".[19]

The Governor-General's explanation did not satisfy the majority in the Council. It condemned Polier's conduct as irregular and considered it undesirable that "he should be permitted to continue in the dominion of the Vazier" and issued order for his recall.[20] Warren Hastings objected

[17] Sec. Cons. 19 Dec. 1774 (1).
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] Sec. Cons. 19 Dec. 1774 (2).
[20] Sec. Cons. 23 Jan. 1775 (6).

to this,[21] but under the Act, the Governor-General had no power to override the decision of the majority. Meanwhile Shuja-ud-daulah died after a short illness recommending his son Asaf-ud-daulah to the care of the English. Immediately after his accession Asaf-ud-daulah instructed Polier to draw up plans for erecting a chain of forts in the frontier of his kingdom. Before Polier wrote to the Government of Bengal asking for their permission to proceed with the work the order of recall reached him.[22] On 9 February, 1775, Polier addressed a long letter to the Governor-General and the Council in which he mentioned his past services to the Company and begged for sufficient time to settle his affair. "I will not pretend to disguise from you", he wrote, "that inevitable ruin must be the immediate consequence of my removal from this country, if I have not sufficient time allowed me to settle my affairs previously. . . . I am convinced 9 months or one year is the least term in which I can be enabled to effect that purpose and which I trust you will so far favour me as to allow. When my faithful and diligent services during the space of near 18 years and notably during the time I had the important charge of the fortifications are duly weighed together with the bar put on my rank depriving me at once of every hope of rising in honour or fortune, I am confident I shall find in your benevolence and equity such a relief as I claim".[23] It does not appear that Polier understood the reason for his recall, for on 24 February, 1775, evidently after the receipt of this letter, it was proposed to explain to Polier that he was being recalled for his conduct "in assisting at the siege of Agra without any authority", and that no time could be granted to him for settling his business affairs.[24] Polier probably tried to seek some relief through the intervention of Asaf-ud-daulah and the Nawab wrote to Warren Hastings. Hastings replied that as the Government considered it necessary to recall Polier he could not revoke the order.[25] But it took some time before Polier could be prevailed upon to leave Oudh.

[21] *Ibid.*
[22] Sec. Cons. 24 Feb. 1775 (10).
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] Sec. Cons. 24 Feb. 1775 (12).
[25] Sec. Cons. 17 April 1775 (1).

On 26 April, 1775, the Governor-General in Council instructed Colonel Gaillez commanding the 2nd Brigade to proceed to Oudh, and if Polier "should be still at Fyzabad to require him positively to leave that place within five days from the receipt of this order", and "if he should not comply", to put him under arrest and cause him to be tried by a General Court Martial for disobedience of the orders of the Governor-General and Council.[26] Colonel Gaillez wrote to Polier informing him of the order of the Council, but before his letter reached him, Polier had left Fyzabad and proceeded to Calcutta.[27]

On 20 August, 1775, the matter was reopened when Polier addressed another letter to the Governor-General and Council. He complained that his letter of February had not been replied to and he had to leave the Nawab's territory because he felt any delay would be construed as an act of disobedience. He saw no reason why his private commercial concerns should be regarded as improper. There was surely a distinction between "an officer attached to the army with the pleasing prospect of rising daily in rank and advantage within the service", and "one who finds himself debarred from every hope, not only of acquiring . . . honourable rank and emolument, but even of that scanty comfort of being able to maintain himself without running in debt". Deprived of his "just rank and rise in the army", he had attempted to better his situation in a way which was both "honourable and justifiable". It must not be thought that he had been "engaged in retailing and peddling in a manner unbecoming a gentleman". He had been "extremely careful not to appear directly in any mercantile transaction whatsoever" . His business had been transacted by persons under him who "made use of the means" he put "in their hands" to carry on the business "in their own names and by their agents". He had done no more than what was "practised daily by people in the highest stations", when they lent "their money on bottomry". Owing to the suddenness of his recall he could not finally adjust his affairs, dispose of what he had and collect his outstanding balance. He had left behind "everything" he possessed "in this world and

[26] Sec. Cons. 26 April 1775 (5).
[27] Sec. Cons. 31 May 1775 (14).

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much more belonging to others" and entrusted to his care. All this he had been compelled to leave under the management of "black servants". Consequently he begged permission to return to Fyzabad and settle his business. If the Government objected to his continuing as the Nawab's engineer and architect, he begged for sufficient time to settle his affairs which he believed would take eight or nine months. Should the Government object to his return on the ground that a servant of the Company must not be concerned in any mercantile transaction, he was ready "though unwillingly" to resign his office.[28]

Polier's letter did not produce any effect. On 14 September, 1775, he was informed that by helping Najaf Khan he had exceeded his authority, that it was "very unbecoming" of an officer "to be concerned in trade", that he carried on his business in other people's name did not justify his action and only showed that his presence was unnecessary, and "instead of remonstrating with the Board he ought immediately to have obeyed its orders". Polier was at liberty to resign but he would not be permitted to go back to Oudh.[29] On 5 October, 1775, Polier informed the Governor-General and Council that he desired to represent his case to the Court of Directors. In order to attend to his affairs properly he wanted to resign the Company's service and proceed to England.[30]

It can hardly be denied that Philip Francis and his friends had acted with some amount of harshness towards Polier, and it appears that he had become a target for Hastings' enemies. The majority in the Council were shocked when Polier was found concerned in mercantile transactions, but there was much truth in Polier's argument that it was "practised daily by people in the highest station". Private trade carried on by servants of the Company was generally suffered and very often winked at. In 1774, when Middleton was appointed Resident with the Nawab of Oudh, it had to be specially laid down that he would not indulge in trade, though he was not prevented "from

[28] Pol. Cons. 14 Sept. 1775 (6).
[29] Pub. Cons. 14 Sept. 1775 (7).
[30] Pub. Cons. 30 Oct. 1775 (7).

accepting any private commission from Shuja-ud-daulah for goods he might require from Calcutta".[31]

Polier resigned in October, 1775. For sometime he completely went out of the picture and little is known about him. After his resignation he accepted service with the Emperor for a short period. He however did not leave India. In a subsequent letter he stated that circumstances prevented him from returning to Europe.[32] Towards the end of 1776, Monson died and Warren Hastings once more began to command the majority in the Council. Polier's fortune appears to have been at a low ebb for he was anxious to be restored to his former office. In 1778 he prayed for readmission to service,[33] but it was two years later that the post of the engineer and architect of the Nawab-wazir of Oudh was offered to him. He was also permitted to stay at Lucknow.[34] But shortly after, this post was abolished, probably as a measure for relieving the financial burdens of the Nawab. On 31 December, 1781, Polier informed the Governor-General and Council from Benares that the post had been annulled and prayed to be restored to the Company's service. He wrote, "You will not deem improper or unreasonable the request I make of a Brevet of Lieutenant Colonel, and further that you would be pleased to join to it the appointment of superintending the surveys in the Upper Provinces, which I held heretofore, and which will prevent me from the mortification of serving immediately under my juniors".[35] A similar letter was addressed to Warren Hastings at Benares in which Polier stated his inability to collect his dues and of his financial troubles. "I have it is true", he wrote, "a small balance in my favour after paying all my debts. And small as it is I should not hesitate a moment in embarking for Europe, was it liquidated and in my reach. But unfortunately both that balance and the amount of all the demands on me are still

[31] Davies, *Warren Hastings and Oudh*, p. 64.

[32] Pub. Cons. 15 April 1782 (14).

[33] Pub. Cons. 15 April 1782 (14). In his letter to Hastings Polier speaks of his financial difficulties, but it should be remembered that two or three years before this he had lent Rs. 80,000 to Najaf Khan. Sen, *Off the Main Track*, p. 53.

[34] Pub. Cons. 22 June 1780 (8); 15 April 1782 (14).

[35] Pub. Cons. 15 April 1782 (14).

in the Nawab's hands, and my prospects of being paid are best known to you. Should that event from your favour take place in the course of the next year it will be the end of July or August 1783 before I can possibly expect to be fully reimbursed, and the beginning of 1784 before I can embark for Europe. During that space of time I am totally destitute of subsistence". Under the circumstances he prayed that he might again be taken in service. "My just rank I will waive. . . . But I trust you will not think a Brevet of Lieutenant Colonel too much for an officer who had served the Hon'ble Company with credit and honour for over 18 years. . . . In addition to that rank I should wish some station that might be keeping me out of the province and at the same time not immediately attached to any brigade enable me to act with satisfaction to myself and without the mortification of serving under my junior. For that purpose permit me to point out the office of superintending the surveys on this side of the Carammassa, which I held heretofore . . .".[36]

Polier's case was placed before the Board on 18th March, 1782. Warren Hastings referred to his "abilities and integrity" while he was in service and proposed that "Major Polier be readmitted on our military Establishment with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel by Brevet and permitted to draw the pay and allowances of that rank".[37] On 15 April, 1782, it was resolved that Anthony Polier "be readmitted into the Company's service and appointed a Lieutenant Colonel on this establishment by brevet, but that he be not stationed to any particular corps till the pleasures of the Court of Directors . . . shall be known".[38] It was also agreed that he "be permitted to remain for the present in the province of Oudh".[39]

Not much is known of Polier after his re-entry into service. He occupied a "large bungalow" at Lucknow and Hodges who stayed at his house during his tour in the Upper Provinces in 1783, speaks of his "wonted hospitality".[40] Polier had cultivated some interest in Indian history and

[36] Pub. Cons. 18 March 1782 (19).
[37] Pub. Cons. 18 March 1782 (18).
[38] Pub. Cons. Minutes of Council 15 April 1782.
[39] *Ibid.*
[40] Hodges, *Travels in India*, p. 143.

literature and became a collector of oriental manuscripts. In 1784, when the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded in Calcutta, he became one of its earliest members. At a meeting of the Society held on 22 January, 1784, his name was proposed by Francis Gladwin and in the next meeting held on 29 January he was duly elected.[41] As he did not reside in Calcutta it was not possible for him to attend the meetings regularly. But occasionally he used to read papers in the Society and communicate articles written by others. On 29 February 1787, he communicated to the Society a paper written by Dr. John Williams.[42] On 20 December 1787 he read a paper on the "History of the Seeks".[43] He also sent a paper on "the distillation of roses as practised in Insin" and a "translation of the inscriptions on pillars in Feroj Shah Kotla" both of which were read at a meeting of the Society on 27 March, 1788.[44] In 1789, Polier returned to Europe, married two years later and settled down near Avignon.[45] On 9 February 1795, he was murdered by robbers. His collection of the Vedas was presented by him during his life-time to the British Museum which also acquired some of his Persian manuscripts. The Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris possesses some of his Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts, and the Bibliotheque Cantonale of Lausanne "contains a manuscript catalogue of 120 Oriental works with annotations by Polier".[46]

III

During his voyage home in 1785, Warren Hastings wrote of Shah Alam that his "wretched apathy and indolence" rendered him "incapable of availing himself of any support, however powerful, to retrieve his affairs, or even to assume the direction of them in any state".[47] The readers of the

[41] Proceedings of the Asiatic Society, 22 Jan., 29 Jan. 1784.
[42] Proceedings of the Asiatic Society, 29 Feb. 1787.
[43] Proceedings of the Asiatic Society, 20 Dec. 1787.
[44] Proceedings of the Asiatic Society, 27 March 1788.
[45] *Bengal Past and Present*, 1910, p. 177; Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, p. 339.
[46] *Ibid.* Sir Jadunath Sarkar tells me that there is a manuscript in the Oriental Public Library, Patna, which bears Polier's name stamp.
[47] Forrest, *Selections from the State Papers of the Governor-General of India* (Warren Hastings), ii, p. 58.

following pages will have little occasion to differ from this opinion. But in his earlier days, Shah Alam or Ali Gahar, as he was called then, showed some promise. In 1758, he escaped from Delhi where his father Emperor Alamgir II was kept a virtual prisoner by his minister Imad-ul-mulk and sought shelter with Najib-ud-daulah. He then visited Shuja-ud-daulah at Lucknow and marched to Behar. He arrived near the outskirts of Patna on 18 March 1759. Ali Gahar had written to Clive calling for his help "in the restoration of the imperial power". But the Emperor was compelled by his minister to write to Mir Jafar and Clive for help against his "rebellious" son. An attempt to storm Patna failed and on the approach of Clive with a small army, Ali Gahar raised the siege and retreated. For about eight months the prince was a "wanderer without home" seeking shelter in Oudh and Behar. In December 1759, he received the news of his father's assassination in Delhi and immediately pro claimed himself Emperor and took the title of Shah Alam II. In February next year he again arrived at Patna and after a preliminary success over Ram Narayan was completely defeated by Caillaud. An attempt to seize Murshidabad was effectively checked and after a half-hearted attack on Patna Shah Alam retreated towards Oudh. In 1761, occurred the third invasion of Behar. General Caillaud completely defeated Shah Alam and "pursued the enemy near three coss on the road to Behar". He was so closely chased that his pursuers "sometimes found the fires of his camps still burning". Shah Alam was at last forced to surrender. He was escorted to Patna by Caillaud when a daily allowance of Rs. 1,800 was settled on him. After the battle of Panipat in 1761, he became extremely anxious to proceed to Delhi and at the assurance of Shuja-ud-daulah left Behar. But Delhi was yet far off, and for the next ten years Shah Alam remained a wanderer. In 1764, he joined with Shuja-ud-daulah and Mir Qasim who had been deposed, and planned an invasion of Behar. They were defeated at Buxar on 22 October 1764 and after a second defeat at Kora on 3 May 1765, Shah Alam was glad to come to terms with the English. Clive signed a treaty with Shuja-ud-daulah at Allahabad by which the English gave Shah Alam Kora and a portion of Allahabad and also agreed to station a

British force at Allahabad for his protection. The Emperor on the other hand granted the Dewani of Bengal, Behar and Orissa to the East India Company in exchange for a payment of twenty-six lakhs of rupees.

From 1765 to 1771 Shah Alam lived at Allahabad and but for his journey to Delhi would have probably led a quiet life under the protection of the British arms. But he had set his heart on going to Delhi. His biographer tells us that "even from the moment of his settlement at Allahabad", he "sighed in secret for the pleasures of the capital, and was ambitious of re-ascending the throne of his ancestors".[48] He was encouraged in this by the Marathas who had regained their position after the battle of Panipat, by his adviser Hisam-ud-daulah who hoped by this measure to gain ascendancy over Munir-ud-daulah and also by Shuja-ud-daulah who felt the Emperor's presence at Allahabad "a check on his designs and an eyesore". The death of the old minister Najib-ud-daulah had also increased the Emperor's anxiety. It left Delhi without any protection and he feared that the Sikhs might take advantage of this and place on the throne one of their own nominees.[49] So he entered into an agreement with the Marathas and promised them forty lakhs of rupees and the districts of Kora and Allahabad. The Marathas took possession of Delhi in his name. The English expressed their displeasure at the Emperor's action, but did not interfere. Shah Alam left Allahabad on 13 April, 1771 and was accompanied by Sir Robert Barker and Shuja-ud-daulah to the frontier.

The author of the manuscript takes up the story from this point and brings it down to the expedition of Abdul Ahad against the Sikhs in 1779. He narrates the quarrel between the Emperor and Zabita Khan, the hostilities between Najaf Khan and Hisam-ud-daulah and Shuja-ud-daulah's operations against the Rohillas. Najaf Khan's siege of Agra is lightly passed over. But the author deals more fully with Asaf-ud-daulah's attempts to secure the Emperor's recognition as Nawab-wazir, Zabita Khan's victory over Shah Alam in 1776, and the exploits of Rahimdad Khan Rohilla. Najaf Khan's operations in

[48] Francklin, *The History of Shah-Aulum*, p. 26.
[49] Sarkar, *Fall of the Moghul Empire*, ii, pp. 549-50.

Alwar and Jaipur are mentioned, and the author describes the effects produced by reports of the ill-success of the English in the Maratha War. It was imagined that the Marathas "were already at the gates", khilats were prepared, troops were collected and it was given out that the Emperor supported by the Maratha army would "fall on the territory of Asaf-ud-daulah". When it became known that the convention of Wadgaon would not be ratified by the English and there was no possibility of the Marathas coming to the Emperor's help, the minister Abdul Ahad Khan found himself at the head of more men than he could afford to maintain. It was impossible to disband them without difficulty, so he was forced to think of some way of employing them and took the field against the Sikhs. The author also gives an account of the "King's domains and revenues" and court, and concludes with an excellent sketch of the "King's person" and "character and conduct in private life" and a description of the royal family.

Shah Alam was fortunate in having a contemporary biographer, who came to India in 1782, the year in which Najaf Khan died and the last phase of Shah Alam's life commenced. In recent times more complete works on the period have appeared and the story of the fall of the Moghul Empire has been discussed from almost all available sources. But it is hoped that the account of Delhi written by Polier in 1779 has not lost in interest. It has never been properly utilised as a source by historians. It should be pointed out that some of the dates mentioned in this manuscript and certain details regarding financial transactions are not borne out by later writers. For instance, according to Polier, Shah Alam "did not make his entry" into Delhi "till the latter end of December 1771". Sir Jadunath Sarkar, on the authority of the Persian sources, puts it at a later date.[50] Such discrepancies may be easily explained. It is not always realised that the contemporary historian suffers from one great disadvantage. Documents which are thrown open to the writer of the next generation are often denied to him. He writes his story from his own observations and information which he collects from others.

[50] Sarkar, *Fall of the Moghul Empire*, ii, p. 555. Francklin however agrees with Polier.

He has no access to state papers and has no means of prying into their secret. But such little differences do not in any way mar the usefulness of this work. Perhaps the chief value of the work lies in the fact that it is the work of a contemporary who had direct knowledge of the events he was writing about. He was supplying materials for his friend's book and could write without fear or favour. The story is sad but does not lack in interest. Events marking the end of the Moghul Empire follow one another in quick succession, and they are so ably described by the author that they appear not only useful to the specialist but fascinating to the general reader also.

A NARRATIVE OF THE TRANSACTIONS AT THE COURT OF DELHY FROM THE YEAR 1771 TO THE PRESENT TIME

DELHY 15TH AUGUST, 1779

A NARRATIVE OF THE TRANSACTIONS AT THE COURT OF DELHY FROM THE YEAR 1771 TO THE PRESENT TIME.

I shall pass over the King's affairs previous to his leaving Ellahabad in 1771, because in general everything relative to him before that time is pretty well known already; I shall only mention that every motive was urged by Sir Robert Barker, to induce him to remain, but he was determined, and nothing could alter his resolution. Several inducements urged the King to this. He could hardly look on his stay at Ellahabad in another light, than as a kind of confinement at large, and tho: he had been extreamely well treated by some of the commanding officers there, yet it is no less true, he had sometimes met with different usage and been much slighted, but there was another cause which operated more powerfully still. Issam al dowlah was then rising in high favour, and though he was kept out of the publick direction of affairs, by the superiour influence of Monir al dowlah, supported by the countenance of the administration, nevertheless, he had in full the King's confidence, and nothing was wanted but a favourable opportunity to place him at the head of affairs. To effect this it was necessary to remove from Ellahabad; Monir al dowlah's great age, would not well permit him to accompany the King, nor I believe had he any inclination to do it, considering how much his influence was in the decline. The King was therefore addressed by many of his servants to proceed to Delhy and there to re-establish his authority in the Upper Provinces; all those who were dissatisfied with Monir al dowlah, and who had hopes of bettering themselves with a new minister, joined in this request; and the King's inclinations being thoroughly for

it, the plan was formed of inviting the Mahrattas, and quitting Ellahabad. Shoujah al dowlah was also at the bottom of it, tho: underhand. The King's stay at Ellahabad did not please him, far from it; it was a check on his designs an eyesore he had long laboured to remove; he had soon intelligence of what was in agitation and he encouraged Issam al dowlah not to give up the point but to persist in it spite of every opposition; he also the better to secure him to his interest, gave him a considerable sum of money, some say 150,000 rupees besides several smaller sums to the other servants of the King and abundance of promises. All these causes coinciding, the King's departure was fixed on. Monir al dowlah was left at Ellahabad to rule that province, and collect the revenues for the King, who was accompanied as far as the frontiers, by Shoujah al dowlah and Sir Robert Barker with some troops, from whence the King reached Farockabad about the setting in of the rains in 1771.

A short time before that, had died Ahmed Khan Bungush, formerly Amir al Omrah in the reign of Alumguir Sany and lately retired on a considerable jaghuir he possesed in the Doab extending from Etawah to near Anopshair. The King on that account, staid some time at Farockabad, Ahmed Khan's capital residence, to settle the Nazarana, etc., which Mozaffer Jung his son agreed to pay, in order to receive the investiture of his father's territories, and prevent the confiscation which is usual after the death of the great officers and servants of the Crown. After some time the business was concluded for 5 lacks of rupees, part of which was received in effects and part in money. The King had also received from Shoujah al dowlah 10 lacks and 12 more from Monir al dowlah for a tanka [?] on the Bengal tribute for the year 1772. He was now therefore not only in cash but also escorted by a small but well chosen body of troops, entirely devoted to him.

After above two months spent about Farockabad, the King came to a place called Nabygunge about 25 cosses on the way to Delhy. He was there joined, after some time, by Sindia, a Mahratta Chief, who came to treat with him and also escort him to the great Mahratta army commanded by Bissagie, and which was then encamped in the neighbourhood of Delhy. After many conferences matters were settled between the Mahrattas and Issam al dowlah now prime minister. Ten lacks were agreed to be paid by the King to the Mahrattas, on condition of being put by them in possession of Delhy, and also of having their assistance to dispossess Zabeta Khan from his territories, upon whom, both the King and the Mahrattas resolved to fall on immediately. The money was paid beforehand, and Seifaldin Mohammed Khan, an officer of the King dispatched with some troops and letters for the Mahratta Chief to have the city and fortress of Delhy delivered to him. On his arrival there he soon got possession of the city, but the Chief who commanded in the troops, on the part of Zabeta Khan, made some difficulty to surrender his charge. He was however soon after brought to reason, by means of some arrangements taken, to pay his people the arrears due to them. On this for the first time since his accession, Shah Alum, became really possessed of his capital, in which however he did not make his entry, till the latter end of December, 1771, a great deal of time having been spent on the route, and in the conferences with the Mahratta Chiefs. The King's stay in Delhy was but short; he seems to have been strongly impelled to the ruin of Zabeta Khan, and for this various reasons were assigned. It was said that Zabeta Khan had been deficient in the respect due to the royal authority and had too much slighted the King during his residence at Ellahabad. It was also whispered that Zabeta Khan while he was all-powerful in Delhy, and in the fortress after Najhib al dowlah's death, had presumed to enter into royal

seraglio, and to have connections with some of the ladies shut up in it, partly with, and partly against their consent. The King's own sister Khair ul nissa, it seems was of the number, and such a conduct in Zabeta Khan was a sufficient provocation to exasperate, in this country, even a much more mild man than Shah Alum is confessed to be. However, whatever the crime was, it made the King pass over the obligations he and his family had to Najhib al dowlah, Zabeta Khan's father, who had for a long while preserved the city and governed it, together with circumjacent country, with the greatest reputation and justice.

As for the Mahrattas they were urged on to this attack on Zabeta Khan, exclusive of the consideration, by a desire of revenging on the son, the ills their nation had received from the father, who had much contributed by his good conduct and bravery, to the great victories gained over them by Ahmed Shah Abdaly. Bissagie and Sindia were particularly, of the 3 Chiefs, the most inveterate, Sindia still bearing on him the marks of their former defeats, having been lamed in one leg for life. Tuckoo alone was somewhat averse to the war, more probably from the rivalry and jealousy he bore to Sindia, than from any other motive. In the beginning of January, 1772, about 20 days after his arrival at Delhy, the King again took the field, and marched against Zabeta Khan accompanied by the whole Mahratta army which was nearly ninety thousand strong. Gassgurh his capital residence for the territory of Sarangpour was evacuated on the King's approach, and Zabeta Khan flew over the Ganges to the possessions he had adjoining to the Rohillas. There he entrenched himself at a town called Soukertal, on the banks of the Ganges, and waited the approach of the royal army; but instead of collecting all his forces in one point, and making one vigorous effort on his antagonists, he separated his army and attempted to guard the different fords of the river, by placing posts in a long

extent of ground on the banks, by which means he much weakened himself, and put it out of his power to give due assistance to either of his flanks if briskly attacked. It happened accordingly after some days spent in viewing his position, a ford was discovered, which had escaped the notice of Zabeta Khan, and Najfken at the head of a chosen party, crossed the Ganges, and attacked one of the opposite posts so resolutely, that it was soon carried. He was followed by the greatest part of the Mahratta army and Zabeta Khan fled after the loss of some of his best officers, without having made hardly any stand, and with great precipitation. He retired to Pattergurh, a fort not far distant, where all his women and family had been placed before; but he was so closely pursued he had not time to draw them away, and was forced to fly further, abandoning everything to the mercy of his enemies. Pattergurh surrendered a few days after, and all the spoil, etc., fell into the Mahrattas' hands. As for Zabeta Khan he was constrained to seek refuge with Shoujah al dowlah, who received him with open arms. Shoujah al dowlah had during this campaign, advanced with all his forces to Shawabad on his frontier, in order to watch the Mahratta's motions, whose proximity and military operations he in no shape relished. However, the fair season was taken up by the royal army in reducing all Zabeta Khan's possessions and making some excursions on the other Rohilla Chiefs, most of whom abandoned their country and withdrew towards Shoujah al dowlah's provinces or the neighbouring hills; and Shoujah remained unmolested, tho: not unthreatened. The rains were at hand and then Mahratta Chiefs pressed the King to cantoon at Bareilly or some other place in that district, promising immediately after they were over, to reduce the whole of the Rohilla dominions to the King's authority, and even to attack Shoujah al dowlah and the troops of the Brigade. The King tho: strongly urged, absolutely refused to consent to it,

said he would neither agree to an attack on the English or on Shoujah al dowlah their ally, and insisted on returning to Delhy, which accordingly was just in execution a few days after. Thus ended that campaign, very little I believe to the King's satisfaction. For the Mahrattas tho: his mercenaries took no pains to please him, or even to keep their word with him, but were ready at all times to sacrifice his interests for a small sum of money. Zabeta Khan's women and family were restored to him thro: Shoujah al dowlah's interest and influence with the Mahratta Chiefs, and on paying them a ransom of one lack and half, which Shoujah al dowlah generously enabled Zabeta Khan to do, by giving him the money, besides supplying him amply for his expences.

The King in the meantime returned to Delhy in June, 1772, when he rewarded Najhaf Khan with the provinces of Hansy and Issar which had been abandoned by Zabeta Khan, and some other purgunnahs, and different chiefs were sent to occupy Sarangpour and the other purgunnahs of the Doab, while the Mahrattas passed the time of the rains in the environs of Cole and Kaurjah in reducing some forts belonging to the Jatts, whom they meant to bring to a compromise for the Chaut.

So soon as the rains were over, affairs began to assume a different aspect. Zabeta Khan had in the interim, in consequence of Shoujah al dowlah's advice, thrown himself on the protection of the Mahrattas. He came for that purpose to Tuckoo to whom he was strongly recommended by Shoujah al dowlah who had all along corresponded with him and there an agreement was made betwixt him and those freebooters, which showed their character in its proper light. They engaged on the consideration of 8 lacks of rupees, to restore him to all his former possessions, a few purgunnahs excepted, which they reserved for themselves, and to effect it by force, if it could not be done otherwise.

The Jatts also who had on the King's first arrival at Delhy, been dispossessed of several purgunnahs they held in the environs of that capital, applied in like manner to the Mahrattas and for a valuable and adequate consideration, were also promised to have those districts restored to them. In consequence mandates were issued by the Mahratta Chiefs to the different officers who held those purgunnahs, to deliver them up, and as their forces were in motion to support their orders, the King's people saw themselves obliged to relinquish all, so that in a few weeks, Shah Alum found himself without any possessions whatever, except the city of Delhy, all the rest returning into those hands, which had occupied them before his arrival, and connections with the Mahrattas.

Nothing could be more disagreeable than the King's situation at this time. His troops which had been dispersed in different parts for the collection of the revenues, now crowded to the capital, and began to be clamorous for their pay; what money he had brought with him from Ellahabad had been mostly spent on those very Mahrattas, and few or no resources left. Such a critical situation required an uncommon exertion of policy, but Issam al dowlah instead of endeavouring by negotiations or by a defensive war, to avert the storm, thought only of turning the circumstances to his own immediate purpose, which was to effect Najhaf Khan's ruin. That Chief had shown so much his attachment to the King, had behaved so well and properly in the last campaign, and had acquired so much influence in the army, that Issam al dowlah could not look on him without the greatest jealousy. The King himself had a regard for Najhaf Khan, but at the same time so perfect a compliance to all the purposes and designs of his minister, the bottom of which he never looked into, that all Najhaf Khan's remonstrances, availed not against the resolve of Issam al dowlah. The King's troops were

mostly disbanded, under pretence that there was nothing left to pay them, and the Mahratta army invited underhand to come to Delhy by Issam al dowlah who laid all the blame of whatever the Mahratta Chiefs had thought proper to complain on Najhaf Khan.

Najhaf Khan saw the blow that was coming, and altho: his Rassala had been disbanded, he continued to keep it up, and it was augmented by several Chiefs who chose to share his fortune, engaged to it by his affability and the reputation he had acquired. He had with him about 5000 horses and he continued to press the King to raise forces, and if possible prevent the Mahrattas from coming to the capital, but all to no purpose.

In the interim the Mahratta army, with the Jatts and Rohillas under Zabeta Khan arrived at a small distance, and now their evil designs appeared but too plain, for Issam al dowlah till then, had persuaded the King they meant nothing against him. Fear began to prevail at court; Najhaf Khan was sent for, and entreated to do what in his power to avert the blow. It was too late to think of negotiating and besides Najhaf Khan had no opinion of it from the ill disposition of Tuckoo, who demanded such conditions as would have left the King nothing whatever. It was therefore resolved to try the field. Of all the King's troops there remained but the two English Battns, and two others, together with the horse attached to Najhaf Khan and Madec's party, who had just before quitted the Jatts, and was come to Delhy where he had been retained by Najhaf Khan. With this force, but very ill provided with ammunition, which Issam al dowlah could not or would not spare, Najhaf Khan marched out of Delhy, and posted himself on a plain at about 1 Coss dist., having the river Jumnah to his left and the old citadel to his right. His situation was good, and it was not easy to cut off his retreat, except thro: the connivance of those who were

placed on the walls of the city itself. Here it is said that Sindia, one of the Mahratta Chiefs, who disapproved of the conduct of his brother sirdars, advised Najhaf Khan not to quit his post, but there to wait the event. This Sindia, is a man of no mean abilities, and reckoned to have both honour and principles. He strongly objected to the agreement made with Zabeta Khan in breach of the former made with the King, and though he could not prevent it's taking effect, he never would assent to it. He came it is true with the other Chiefs, yet he resolved to be only a spectator, and to have no hand in the business that was to follow. Perhaps thro: his mediation, tho: there was a great coldness betwixt him and Tuckoo, things might have been accommodated, but the lot was cast.

The Mahrattas and allies who were encamped about 2 cosses to the southward of Najhaf Khan's little army, no sooner saw him posted, than they began to attack him throughout his whole front. The King's troops owing to their good situation, repulsed them easily, which encouraged them inconsiderately to quit their post in pursuit of the enemy, but they had too great numbers to contend with. Najhaf Khan carried away by his ardour, soon saw himself surrounded by a vastly superiour body of cavalry, and had great difficulty to cut his way through them, after having lost his most attached companions and a beloved cousin. Madec with his party, advancing also too rashly in the pursuit, found himself surrounded, and had it not been for a timely run under the protection of the old citadel, where he was glad to get in with part of his party, would have been cut to pieces. In short, the rout or defeat was great, and would have been compleat had not the two English Battalions with a 3 of the King, stood their ground firmly, and at night covered the retreat with great resolution and tolerable order. They saved Najhaf Khan who grown desperate with the loss of his cousin was become indifferent

to life, and could hardly be kept from rushing by himself on the enemy.

Night alone put an end to the flight and the bad success of it was attributed to the treachery of Issam al dowlah who had allowed the Mahrattas to pass unmolested under the walls of the city and near to his post, after they had been repulsed in front, and attempted to surround Najhaf Khan's party. It is however certain, that Issam al dowlah was not displeased at the event, which had it been favourable, would have gained Najhaf Khan much glory.

After this the King's troops did not any more venture to go out of the city, and negotiations were set on foot to appease the Mahrattas, and make up matters. Sindia had during the whole action remained a tranquil spectator of it, at a distance, and when it was over, he departed with all his forces to Azmer, a small subah he possesses to the south-west of Delhy, at about one hundred and forty cosses distance.

Tuckoo therefore remained sole uncontrolled master, and he and Bissagie dictated terms as conquerors. After some days spent in negotiations, the Mahrattas moved their camp nearer to the city and made their entry into the fortress with Zabeta Khan at the head of a vast number of troops, with drums beating, and colours flying. They came with their elephants to the very gates of the Grand Divan, contrary to the established rules, which allow such an honour, only to the royal family. They made their obeisances it is true, according to custom, but the King was forced to descend from his throne and sit on a small carpet on the ground to receive them. He was however afterwards replaced on his throne, by Tuckoo and Bissagie, but on the whole the interview passed in the most humiliating manner for the King, and with the greatest insolence on the part of the Mahrattas. The whole fortress was filled with their troops, and it was not without great difficulty.

they could be prevented from running into the women's quarters. After this visit, Issam al dowlah who laid the blame of all that had passed disagreeable to the Mahrattas, on Najhaf Khan, found no difficulty to bring Tuckoo to his views on that Chief, for which and the more effectually to secure him to his interest, he gave betwixt him and Bissagie, above one lack of rupees. For this sum the Mahrattas engaged to drive Najhaf Khan out of Delhy and to strip him. This point secured, a message in the King's name was sent to Najhaf Khan to pay some arrears of a sum he had bound himself for, the year before, to save the town of Amroe from plunder; Najhaf Khan having been dispossessed before of what territories he had, and having always spent his income beforehand could not find means to pay this sum, but endeavoured to excuse himself by saying he had laid out the money on his troops. This was not accepted as a good plea, and a heavy Dustuck was sent on him. There was no way of avoiding that, but by raising the money demanded which was about 80,000 rupees; what with the purses of his friends, some jewels he put in pawn, and some plates he sold, he made a shift to raise the money, tho: not without the greatest difficulty. But his distresses did not end there. He was peremptorily ordered to quit the city and threatened with force and violence if he did not do it willingly. Najhaf Khan then found himself in a very desperate situation. He saw plainly his ruin was intended and that nothing else would satisfy Issam al dowlah. He was overwhelmed in despair, for the loss of his cousin, and left without money or the smallest resource. In this distress his courage did not forsake him. His friends also resolved to stand by him to the last drop of blood. They collected all their women and children in the quarter occupied by Najhaf Khan's house and resolved to defend themselves there, and if forced, to poniard their families and rush on the enemy. About 1200 men were found on mustering up

the forces, and barricades were immediately begun, and some small field pieces and swivels fixed on the avenues.

The whole quarter was soon after surrounded by troops sent from Issam al dowlah; however, they could effect nothing and recourse was had to the Mahrattas, who at first objected to the sending of troops for such purpose in the town, lest occasion should be taken from it to pillage it. This was overruled by a written message from the King, who with an unpardonable weakness, in compliance to Issam al dowlah's representations, insisted on Najhaf Khan's being driven out at any price.

The Mahrattas then interfered and Najhaf Khan was so much straitened for the necessaries of life, that a resolution was taken by himself and friends, to rally sword in hand on their enemies, after having massacred all their women and children and to accept of no quarter. However luckily for him, he was not necessitated to come to such extremities.

Some of the Mahratta Chiefs began to pity his situation and interest themselves for his preservation. Tuckoo sent him proposals and assurances of safety by a nephew of his, who after the most solemn oath used by the Mahrattas, prevailed on Najhaf Khan to come out of his house, and quit Delhy.

This was done with a solemnity which evidently showed the respect and love his Mogols bore him. He was mounted on horse back, and all his friends and well wishers to the amount of some thousands followed him on foot, and closely surrounded him on all sides, making use at the same time of the same expression or invocation (Ya Hussein) that are wont by the Persians when commemorating the massacre of Hussein, and loading all the way Issam al dowlah with reproach and abuse. In this manner Najhaf Khan came to the gate of the fortress, from whence he sent a message to the King, begging to have the favour of seeing him once more and to receive his dismission from his own

mouth, but even this was not granted. He then proceeded in the same manner to Tuckoo's tent where he was politely and honourably received. There it was agreed he should return to his own house in the city and in 3 [days?] should come to the camp with all his people. Tuckoo also, on Najhaf Khan's representing to him that he and his people had eat nothing for some time, sent him a sum of money and received him into his service, from that day, at first at 3,000 rupees and afterwards at 6,000 rupees a day. The Mahrattas were then perfect masters at the Court of Delhy. They got the King who could refuse them nothing, to restore to Zabeta Khan the post of first Buxy or Amir al Omrah, which had been taken from him but a few months before, and thro: their means, and also the greatest part of those provinces he had heretofore possessed. The Jatts also, had the purgunnahs which had been taken from them, and the Mahrattas not forgetting their own interests, got Merit and 11 purgunnahs adjacent, in the best situation of the whole Doab, made over to themselves in Altumgah. Nothing hardly was left to the King, who was, moreover, forced to make many presents in money to those mercenary wretches, who concluded by compelling him to give them a grant of the provinces of Ellahabad and Corah, remaining still in the King's hands under the direction of Monir al dowlah, for these last they got the Sunnuds, it is true, but had not time sufficient to put them in force.

Shortly after, the Mahrattas quitted Delhy and Najhaf Khan went along with them. Their designs were against the Rohillas, but the latter were assisted by Shoujah al dowlah's forces, and a Brigade. The Mahrattas could effect nothing, were forced to recross the Ganges, and to fly; but before that and so soon as the two armies came near, Najhaf Khan, took the first opportunity of coming almost alone to Shoujah al dowlah and Sir Robert Barker, and to offer his services. He effectually represented his situation

and the miseries he had suffered, and showed the dislike he entertained of his new masters, whom, from mere necessity, he had been obliged to follow.

Shoujah al dowlah received him heartily, and I suppose at Sir Robert Barker's request, interested himself strongly in his favour. The Mahrattas soon after began their march towards the Deccan, having been recalled, it is supposed on account of the dissensions which have raged amongst them for these 6 years past, and Shoujah al dowlah dissatisfied with Issam al dowlah's late conduct, conferred great honours on Najhaf Khan, and appointed him his Naib or deputy in the office of Vizir, after which he sent him back to Delhy, strongly recommended to the King, both by himself and Sir Robert Barker; Shoujah also supplied him with cash for his expences, and in short behaved exceedingly well to him.

On this Najhaf Khan returned to Delhy, where he was well received and caressed by the King, and no notice taken of what had past. About this time the King had been a little displeased with his minister Issam al dowlah. He had given him some time before, 3 lacks worth of jewels to put in pawn, to pay a sum promised to the Mahrattas. Issam al dowlah had engaged shortly to return those jewels; however on the King's demanding them, he pretended he had not wherewith to take them out of pawn. The King was dissatisfied, and his displeasure was soon observed. Most if not all the servants, were open or concealed enemies of Issam al dowlah and every one did what lay in his power to pull him down. Najhaf Khan came in the interim, brought strong recommendations, and some force. He proposed to the King not only to return him his jewels, but also to pay off some of the troops that were very clamorous, if Issam al dowlah was put into his hands; the King assented and Issam al dowlah coming out of the Durbar was confined without resistance. The confiscation

of Issam al dowlah's effects etc. amounted to near ten lacks of rupees, as had been mentioned in the narrative of Najhaf Khan, and was the foundation of all the achievements he has performed since.

Najhaf Khan was then all powerful at court; by his credit Abdulahd Khan was appointed Diwan Kholsah and 3rd Buxy, and he obtained whatever he could ask.

Thus fell Issam al dowlah, a man who rose from the lowest station, not by his merit or abilities, but by having discovered his master's foible, and administered to his pleasures, by supplying him with young women whom he collected from all parts; he had little or no genius, no education whatever, for he could neither read or write, and so much pride and insolence in his deportment after he came to power, that he disgusted all the principal officers, and servants of the King, most of whom he displaced to put in his own creatures. In short, during his favour he was feared and detested, and his disgrace was unlamented. He remained in confinement tho: not closely, for about 2 years, after which Najhaf Khan gave him his liberty and some time after allowed him a genteel maintenance, since which time Issam al dowlah has been with him. The Mahrattas being now departed, and Najhaf Khan having begun his enterprises against the Jatts in conjunction with the King's troops, several purgunnahs in the neighbourhood of Delhy fell into the King's hands, and the affairs of the court began to bear a more favourable aspect. The Mahrattas however still kept possession of Merit and several of the finest purgunnahs adjoining to it, of which the King dared not dispossess them, tho: their army was absent and what few men they had left to collect the revenues were in no state to resist.

It was now the beginning of 1774, Shoujah al dowlah was advanced to Etawah, from which country he had driven the Mahratta garrisons, and where he was waiting the

arrival of the Brigade to attack the Rohillas. Agra in the interim fell into Najhaf Khan's hands, after which Shoujah al dowlah dispatched to the Court of Delhy his confidant and prime minister Ellitch Khan with a considerable retinue, in order to prevail on the King to take the field and fall jointly with him on the Rohillas, or if not, at least to obtain the different Sunnuds as grants, which Shoujah al dowlah had engaged himself to produce, previous to the attack on the Rohillas. Ellitch Khan arrived in Delhy in the beginning of February. He had brought forces and money with him, with the first he browbeat the court, and with the other he bribed largely. He first proposed to the King to take the field, and join his forces to Shoujah al dowlah's, and then to fall all together on the Rohillas; for this the King was to be put in possession of half the conquered territory, to have two lacks paid before-hand to defray his expences, with 10,000 rupees a day while marching, and 5,000 on halting days. The King was also to have half the plunder, but not till the Brigade had been fully paid and satisfied.

The King assented to all this apparently, tho: at the bottom he had no inclination to go and kept corresponding with Hafiz Rhaimut, whom it is thought he warned of what was in agitation. He was however prevailed on to cross the Jumnah, and encamp on the eastern bank of it, at Shadera, making a show of an intention of joining Shoujah al dowlah who was advanced as far as Cassgunge within 55 coss from Delhy. He also received the two lacks of rupees and about 75,000, more, during his stay in that camp, after which under apprehence of indisposition he returned abruptly into the fortress.

Ellitch Khan however what with coaxing and threatening, money and promises, obliged the King to give him the Sunnuds, for the provinces of Kaunoge and Etawah, the whole country of the Rohillas, and also the provinces of

Ellahabad and Corah, and moreover a letter under the King's own hands which constituted Shoujah al dowlah as his Vizir, the sole arbiter of all the royal concerns, and interests, without exception. This was the great point Shoujah al dowlah had in view. With this delegated power he remitted to the Company, if I am not mistaken in my conjecture, the Bengal tribute, and no objection after that could he made to his acquisitions, warranted by the royal Sunnuds, and bargained for though for a very insignificant, inadequate price.

But to drop that subject, Shoujah al dowlah obtained all he wanted from the court, at an expence of about 3 lacks and half, and a faithful promise, on oath, of giving to the King half of what should be conquered from the Rohillas, or an equivalent in the Doab, and adjoining to the provinces then in the King's possession. This however, it plainly appeared afterwards, Shoujah al dowlah never meant to perform, and was only intended to amuse the King.

Ellitch Khan also during his stay at the Court of Delhy prevailed on the King to grant to Zabeta Khan the Sunnuds for Miret and the other Purgunnahs hitherto possessed by the Marhattas. Zabeta Khan was to hold them in farm, and pay the revenues to the King and Shoujah al dowlah was led to do this favour for Zabeta Khan to engage him to side with him in his intended attack on the Rohillas which Zabeta Khan promised to do, tho: they were his country men. The Mahrattas were therefore dispossessed of those purgunnahs, and absolutely drove from the Upper Provinces of Indostan, Azmer excepted.

In the interim Najhaf Khan after his visit to Shoujah al dowlah at Etawah, had come to Delhy, where he was received with great coolness; however, thro: Ellitch Khan's influence, inspite of the manoeuvres of Abdulahd Khan who was then in growing favour, he was reconciled to the King,

and assisted Ellitch Khan in getting what he wanted, having been sent purposely by Shoujah al dowlah who had that business much at heart. In the course of their solicitations high words and menaces were used by Ellitch Khan towards Abdulahd Khan with an insolence which nothing but his low extraction could warrant. However, they had their effect in the end, for Abdulahd Khan to get rid of him, made the King assent to all he wanted.

Ellitch Khan then left Delhy, and Najhaf Khan did the same shortly after, that is about the end of April 1774, and as it has been said before in his narrative, went towards Bissowly, to assist Shoujah al dowlah, with his forces, in the reduction of the Rohillas, Zabeta Khan also joined Shoujah al dowlah with a few troops, and on account of his being remiss in paying the stipulated rents for Miret, etc. The King's people took possession of that, and the other purgunnahs he farmed, which were delivered up without resistance.

The King's affairs at that time, tho: far from brilliant, were not however so bad as they had been and had he thought proper to join Shoujah al dowlah in his campaign, there is no doubt, but he would have secured something more for himself, spite of all Shoujah's evasions. But in all likelyhood he was prevented from doing it by his minister Abdulahd Khan, who wisely considered, that his influence would be absolutely overruled by the superiour qualities and power of Shoujah al dowlah, for whom Shah Alum ever entertained a great regard, he therefore dissuaded the King from it and his Majesty ever submissively observant of his minister's desires, declined the business, under very frivolous pretences.

When Najhaf Khan returned from Bissowly, he took his route thro: Delhy. He had with him exclusive of his own troops, some which Shoujah al dowlah had stationed with him, and he had private instructions from Shoujah al

dowlah to endeavour to remove Abdulahd Khan, from the directions of affairs, being both of them dissatisfied with several parts of his behaviour, which plainly showed, how little inclined he was to their interests. Abdulahd Khan had it seemed notice of what was designed against him and he kept himself close in the fort of Selimgurh adjoining to the royal fortress, and besides that so far brought the King to his side, by representing to him, the ill disposition of Najhaf Khan and Shoujah al dowlah towards the royal court, and their rapacious ambitious views, which were visible enough, that the King showed so much disapprobation of any attempt to remove Abdulahd Khan from his office, as obliged Najhaf Khan to desist from his design, which could not have been carried into execution, without doing a violence which I believe was far from his intentions. Najhaf Khan fell sick in the interim of a jaundice, but on his recovery thought it best to accommodate matters with the court and lose no further time at Delhy, which began to be precious; Abdulahd Khan and him were reconciled at a fresh expence [exchange?] of oaths and protestations, made as solemn as possible, but as insincere on either side as could be, after which Najhaf Khan departed from Delhy, seemingly on the best terms with the court.

About this time an event happened at the court, which as it is not very creditable to the King, I would willingly pass over, but as on the other hand it is necessary I should represent every thing I know, which may show his character in its proper light, I am necessitated to relate the affairs. Cassim aly Khan was then going from one place to another in the Upper Provinces. He had left Jaypour and was come within about 20, coss of Delhy. By means of some friend he had at the court, he found means to enter into a secret negotiation with the King to whom he proposed to give 7 lacks of rupees, on condition of being placed in the station of Abdulahd Khan, who was to be put in his hands.

The King, it is said, assented but insisted on having good security for the money, while this was in agitation, and the securities were preparing, Abdulahd Khan had notice of the affair and immediately took measures to prevent it. He was far from having then the great credit and influence he has at present, but he had enough to get an immediate order to Cassim aly Khan who had on the strength of his negotiations come close to the city, to decamp instantly from the King's territories.

As for the King he denied his having assented to the proposal and laid all the blame of the affair, on one or two of his servants, who accordingly were disgraced instantly, and thus ended the affair.

Sumbre had also in the interval left the Jatts, as it has been related before. He was invited to Delhy by Abdulahd Khan and after having received a Khelat from the King was sent to the Purgunnahs of Panniput etc. to bring them to order. But he remained there not long. Abdulahd Khan was warned of the displeasure it would give the nation, to see Sumbre entertained in the King's service and in consequence he was at the end of about 4 months, dismissed and afterwards very kindly received by Najhaf Khan who had been one of the first to exclaim against the Court of Delhy for entertaining of him.

When Shoujah al dowlah engaged Zabeta Khan to side with him against the Rohillas, he solemnly promised him, that whatever he possessed in the Rohilcund viz. the territories of Patergurh, Najhibabad, Amroe etc. should be left unmolested and in his possession. However no sooner were the Rohillas defeated, but Shoujah al dowlah forgot his promises, and seized all Zabeta Khan's possessions on the eastern side of the Ganges and adjoining to the Rohilcund. But to make up the matter to him, he strongly recommended him at Delhy, to be restored to the farm of Merit and the adjacent purgunnahs, once more made over to him, for

about 9 lacks of rupees per annum. This happened about the latter end of 1774.*

Shoujah al dowlah died in January 1775. His eldest son Asef al dowlah succeeded him of course, in the subah of Aud which the King had in 1765, at Lord Clive's intercession settled on Shoujah al dowlah and his heirs for ever, in Altumgah (which is a permanent fief.) But the new acquisitions in the Rohilcund, the Doab, the provinces of Ellahabad and Corah, together with the post of Vizir, all these ought according to the ancient custom of the Empire to have reverted to the King, as also the confiscation of all Shoujah al dowlah's chattels and goods.

Tho: from the debility and want of power of the Court of Delhy, such reversions do not take place now a days, nevertheless, while the name of King is preserved in the illustrious family of Timur, the different princes or Omrahs of India will always be proud to acknowledge his right, by applying to him, and requesting the patents of investiture for their different territories, and also for having particular honours conferred on themselves, none being hereditary in India. In those cases it is usual to present the King with a sum of money called Nazarana, and the sum is in proportion to the distance, the power of the party, and the office solicited.

Asef al dowlah was desirous to secure his right to all his father's dominions by the royal Sunnuds, and the investiture of the Vizarut, and he was a good deal afraid but his next brother Sadet aly Khan should claim his share, and secure the provinces of the Rohilcund, which Shoujah al dowlah had left in his charge sometime before his death. Asef al dowlah, therefore, shortly after his accession, dispatched Ellitch Khan, to Delhy with money, and full powers to treat of those matters with the court, and to endeavour

* The India Office Copy reads "This happened in the year 1774."

to get the different Sunnuds, together with the post of Vizir conferred on him. Asef al dowlah's new favourite Mortuzah Khan, was also glad of any opportunity of removing Ellitch Khan who stood in his way and of whom both he and his master Asef al dowlah were much afraid, tho: it has since appeared without just grounds.

Ellitch Khan arrived at Delhy and was very desirous of obtaining what he came for, which he thought would have secured him the good graces of his young master. But he was hardly there, than he was counteracted in his designs by letters and messages from Mortuzah Khan to Abdulahd Khan, who wished to have the business go thro: him and by his own agents. In this manner there were two competitors but Ellitch Khan had the advantage of Mortuzah Khan in having the command of cash, which the great confidence he had enjoyed under Shoujah al dowlah had enabled him to collect. He therefore offered ten lacks of rupees on the Naib, for the Vizarut and Sunnuds; but Abdulahd Khan blinded by the solicitations he received from both sides and imagining he could get more by temporizing, refused that sum, and delayed giving a definitive answer in the most evasive and fallacious manner.

Ellitch Khan thus baffled, and hearing besides how affairs went at his own court, left Delhy, and joined Najhaf Khan by whom he was extreamely well received and caressed, on account of the money he gave him, and which came very opportunely. It was now the beginning of 1776. The bad management of Mortuzah Khan and other causes, had so far drained Asef al dowlah's coffers, that no money could be raised to pay the necessary Nazarana to the King for the Vizarut etc. and I believe at that time Abdulahd Khan heartily repented, he had not taken Ellitch Khan's ten lacks. Nothing but promises and bonds could be got from Mortuzah Khan's agents, and the King never was in greater want of money. Zabeta Khan had. as related before, farmed the

purgunnahs of Miret etc., at first he had been tolerably punctual in his stipulated payments for the said farm. But afterwards he began to neglect them greatly, and in such a manner that he paid on the whole little more than one-third of what he had agreed. This induced the King and his minister in February 1776, to think of recovering those purgunnahs from him. For that purpose Abdulcassim, a first cousin of the minister, was sent with all the forces that could be brought together, which consisted of four Battns. of seapoys, about 2,000 horse and some irregular foot, with about 20 pieces of small artillery.

Zabeta Khan on his side exclusive of his own Rohillas, which were very near 10,000 men, had got some of the Siques as auxiliaries. A battle was fought [on] the 15th March 1776, about 30 cosses to the northeast of Delhy, in which at first the King's Battns. had the advantage, particularly the two English Battns. who drove before them the Rohilla Infantry. However in coming to a bank, a number of the enemy, who had concealed themselves behind it, starting up on a sudden, put first those Battns. in some disorder, which was soon augmented, by a brisk attack from them, and at the same time by the cavalry who came up full speed, and began to break thro: the Battns. The defeat was compleat. The two Battns. lost their artillery and about 400 men on the field, and saved themselves with difficulty in a small fortified town that happened to be just by, where they were joined by the two other Battns., who by keeping close together, and not advancing too rashly, had escaped the general defeat. However, they were immediately surrounded by Zabeta Khan's troops, and blocked up in such a manner, that no possibility remained of escaping; after a few days, famine obliged those troops to think of treating and they were allowed to march out with their arms and artillery, only leaving their effects.

As for the King's cavalry, most of it had flown on the

beginning of the action, and the poor Commander in chief, a very good honest man by all accounts, but a perfect cripple, who could not move from his palankin without assistance, was abandoned alone in the midst of the plain, by all his people and at too great a distance from the Battns. to be helped by them. In this state, he was met by the enemy's cavalry, and refusing quarter had his head cut off. Thus ended this expedition as ill advised as it was ill conducted. Zabeta Khan after his victory advanced with all his forces, and possessed himself not only of all the purgunnahs, he had been driven from by the King's troops, but even of most of those that belonged to the King, close to the walls of Delhy, and it is not easy to say how far he would have carried his resentment, had not at the same time fortune interfered in favour of the King.

Amongst other articles demanded by the Court of Delhy from Asef al dowlah in order to obtain the Vizarut etc., it was stipulated that the latter should send and maintain a certain body of troops to attend on the King, and be subservient to his orders. Asef al dowlah tho: he could not spare any money, had troops enough, and in order to show how ready he was to fulfill his engagements, he sent a body of about 5,000 Najhibs commanded by an eunuch named Letafit, who arrived at Delhy, just on the day in which the battle was lost against Zabeta Khan.

Nothing could have come more seasonable, for tho: Letafit had neither orders or inclination to act offensively against Zabeta Khan, nevertheless, the presence of so considerable a body of troops checked Zabeta Khan and made him think of coming to terms, wisely foreseeing that if he continued the contest he would draw on himself more enemies than one. Matters were therefore accommodated thro: the mediation of Letafit who was handsomely complimented by Zabeta Khan and things were put on the same footing they had been before the war, only with this

difference, that the terms of the farm were more favourable to Zabeta Khan who had besides two purgunnahs given him in jaghir for his son, and besides, while things remained in suspence, Zabeta Khan collected the revenues of all the purgunnahs he had seized on, which, together with the arrears of his farms, was remitted him. Thus ended that contest, which might have proved fatal to the Court of Delhy, had not the King been so opportunely relieved. Exclusive of the body of troops to be maintained near the King at Asef al dowlah's expence, it had been stipulated with Mortuzah Khan, to pay down for the Vizarut and Sunnuds, 15 lacks of rupees, part in money and part in effects. On these conditions the Khelats etc. were to be sent. However, the circumstances were now much altered. Tho: the minister had lost none of his cunning and artifice, nevertheless, he was a good deal humbled, and the bare mention of Letafit's return in case the Khelats and Sunnuds were not immediately delivered, made him now give gratis, what he had before so long refused 10 lacks for, Asef al dowlah was then at last appointed Vizir, and he promised on his side to perform all that had been agreed on before. In consequence some trifling presents of various effects and some elephants were sent to the King by Asef al dowlah to the amount of 2 lacks of rupees tho: valued at 4. But no greater sum or any cash whatever has been since sent on that account. During these transactions Abdulahd Khan, who was ever studying the means of checking Najhaf Khan became obnoxious to the Court of Delhy from his breach of promises, ambition, and successes, raised such a storm against him, as might have proved fatal to him, had not fortune, always so kind to him, timely interfered.

One Mullah Rhaimdat Khan, a Rohilla Chief, had left Najhaf Khan's service on some disgust. He had been with him from his first setting out against the Jatts, and had

greatly contributed to his successes. His bravery and resolute temper, occasioned much envy against him, and raised him many enemies amongst the other Chiefs, who were the occasion of his going away from Najhaf Khan's service to the Jatts, by whom he was received with open arms. It was while with them that he gave Madec's party a total defeat, near the banks of the Chambal river, to the southward of Agra. Madec in this affair, which he managed with his usual inconsideration lost everything whatever, and barely saved his life by the help of a good horse, while Rhaimdat Khan and his men, got a considerable booty, exclusive of arms and a large train of artillery.

Shortly after which Rhaimdat not finding that encouragement from the Jatts he had expected, listened to some proposals he received from the Court of Delhy and soon after came to that capital where he was made much of.

The Mullah was ambitious, and besides prompted a good deal by revenge against Najhaf Khan who in reward for his good services, had, he thought, treated him very unjustly. He therefore entered into all Abdulahd Khan['s] views, and even went beyond them.

The purgunnahs of Sonput Panniput and two others adjoining were given him for the payment, of his troops amounting then to about 7,000 foot and 3,000 horse, and a *carte blanche* besides.

He also received some money and immediately began to act. This happened in the beginning of 1776, Rhaimdat Khan soon reduced his four purgunnahs, and in consequence of his *carte blanche* increased his troops, from numbers of straggling Rohillas who resorted to him from all sides. He then extended himself, and soon seized on all the country adjoining to him the greatest part of which belonged to Najhaf Khan who being then busy with the siege of Dig could not spare troops to oppose him. He also defeated some bodies of Siques who pretended to face him

and in a couple of months overrun a vast extent of country, with a vigour and resolution unequalled. He wrested from Najhaf Khan the fine provinces of Hansy and Hissar and defeated in a surprise Mahomed Bochir Khan then in Najhaf Khan's service, whom he stripped of all he had. In short Rhaimdat Khan was successful every where, and did Najhaf Khan an infinite mischief.

He attacked also Amer Sing, a powerful Zemindar, bordering on the Siques, and who had himself adopted their sect and overrun his country, taking many rich towns, and making an immense booty. He thus went on, and it is hard to say where he would have stopped, had not fortune interfered and removed from Najhaf Khan, the most dangerous enemy he ever had. Rhaimdat Khan had just surrounded Gind the capital place of a petty Zemindar, by name Gujheput Sing and related to Amer Sing, and was treating with the garrison for a surrender of the place, and the payment of a sum of money. His troops loaded with plunder, unsuspecting any enemy in the field, unprepared and dispersed up and down in different parts, were on sudden attacked early in the morning by a party of about 5,000 Siques who had reached Gind in the night to save the place if possible. Rhaimdat Khan with the few people he could immediately [collect?] and[?] soon drove them off; but advancing close to the walls of the place in the pursuit, he was mortally wounded by 3 balls in the head and body. With the Chief the spirit of the party sunk. The Rohillas were immediately put in confusion, and such as stood cut to pieces. The defeat was as compleat as could be, all the plunder they had before collected, was taken from them, and such as escaped with life, were stript naked, and otherwise ill used, not only by the Siques, but also by the country people, who in such cases always turn on the conqueror's side, but who besides were glad to revenge the ills they had been made to suffer before, from the Rohillas, who are

in general a very mercyless people. Thus fell Rhaimdat Khan a Chief of the greatest intrepidity, and at the same time it is said, a man of principles, true to his word, and a religious strict partizan of the Mahomedan faith.

Amer Sing joined by the Siques immediately possessed himself of all Rhaimdat Khan's conquests; which he kept, until Najhaf Khan, after the taking of Dig, was enabled to send Najhaf Couly Khan with a considerable force in that quarter: when after some conferences Amer Sing gave up all that had heretofore belonged to Najhaf Khan, as for the King's purgunnahs they were also delivered up, on some concessions made by the minister, in favour of Amer Sing and his relation. Rhaimdat Khan's defeat happened in May 1776, so that the Court of Delhy met almost at the same time with two considerable checks.

Najhaf Khan had been highly exasperated at many of the proceedings of the minister, who tho: he kept up the most friendly appearances with him, was constantly endeavouring to throw obstacles in his way, and encourage his enemies underhand. The bad success his machinations had met with, made Abdulahd Khan think of making up matters with Najhaf Khan now grown by the capture of Dig powerful and at liberty to take his revenge. All the blame was laid on Rhaimdat Khan, and the best colouring put on all that had passed that the things would admit of.

The minister himself proposed to pay Najhaf Khan a visit, and to engage him, to take the King's part and vengeance for the rebellion of Zabeta Khan. For that purpose he was just setting out of Delhy, when a stop was put to his journey, by a mutiny of the two English Battalions, the King had brought with him from Ellahabad. Those two Battns. had, while they preserved their first discipline and order, behaved tolerably well but that soon wore off. Their Commandants were made too much of and encouraged to cabal which made them grow mutinous,

and insolent. They were also ill paid, and since their last defeat by Zabeta Khan had been much neglected by the minister who evidently meant to reduce them as low as possible. On this account, just when Abdulahd Khan was getting out of Delhy to proceed on his journey to Dig, the two Battns. surrounded his elephant, obliged him to dismount and placed him with a strong guard in a neighbouring mosque, where he was kept 3 days and until he had given them full security for the payment of all their arrears, which amounted to near 80,000 rupees. This business put a stop to the minister's intended visit, and the Battns. were paid and dismissed the service.

If Abdulahd Khan was vexed at the ill usage he had met with from those mutineers, I believe at the bottom he was glad of an opportunity to get rid of them. His favour was daily increasing, notwithstanding the ill success of his administration, and he was desirous that all the troops should be devoted to him, and commanded by his creatures and dependents; now these two Battns were known to be, bad as they were, entirely at the King's disposal, and ready to execute his orders, which was a sufficient crime to render them obnoxious to the minister.

The visit to Najhaf Khan being set aside on account of his mutiny, the King and his minister were very solicitous to gain otherwise Najhaf Khan and make him undertake the chastizement of Zabeta Khan. The most friendly letters and messages were continually sent him, and Najhaf Khan who had besides, as I have before noted, some reason to be dissatisfied with Zabeta Khan, promised his assistance, and that he would soon be at Delhy for that purpose with all his army. He, however, spent some time in reducing a few rebellious Zemindars in the Doab, and did not reach the royal camp on the eastern banks of the Jumnah till the beginning of February 1777.

His intentions at first appeared extreamely dubious. It

was well known how ill he had been used by the minister, and had he been of a revengeful disposition, it is certain he had now an opportunity of retorting on Abdulahd Khan the ills he had suffered thro: his contrivance. He was even pressed to do it, by his confidants and principal Chiefs, and to seize on or cut off Abdulahd Khan when he should come to him. But to do justice to Najhaf Khan he rejected the proposal from the first, and declared that if Abdulahd Khan gave him further cause of dissatisfaction, he would lay hold of him publickly, but never by treachery. Abdulahd Khan on his side had his fears; but he so artfully managed himself, so plausibly defended and palliated all his past conduct, that Najhaf Khan who has not a bad heart at bottom, was reconciled to him; new oaths and protestations were made on each side, and Abdulahd Khan to make his peace, consented to grant to Najhaf Khan the farming of 14 fine purgunnahs in the Doab, adjoining to Najhaf Khan's possessions, and which were set apart for the King's private expences.

Najhaf Khan had on his march to join the royal camp, under pretence that those purgunnahs were rebellious (which was not without some truth) seized on them, and taken by force some of the richest and most powerful of the Zemindars whom he heavily ransomed besides collecting the revenues of the season for himself. This proceeding at first caused some consternation at the court, for it was not known how it would end. However, after Najhaf Khan's first audience from the King, he had the address, what with protestations of fidelity etc. and a proper management of Abdulahd Kn's fears, to get those purgunnahs made over to him in farm, for a sum of about 7 lacks of rupees, not half of their real value.

The campaign against Zabeta Khan followed, as has been related in Najhaf Khan's narrative. The purgunnahs recovered from Zabeta Khan ought agreeable to agreement

to have been immediately occupied by the King's people but Najhaf Khan who had a numerous half starved army with him, was forced to satisfy their clamorous demands, by granting them those purgunnahs, which however, he solemnly engaged to return to the King after the war was over. This however was not done, and for the same reasons as before, and the plunder of Gassgurh of which the King ought to have had the largest share, was all engrossed by Najhaf Khan and his rapacious Chiefs; all this discontented the King much and Abdulahd Khan whose vengeance of Zabeta Khan was nearly satisfied, not a little fomented the ill humour. He was jealous of Najhaf Khan, envious of his fortune, and he conceived besides a very mean opinion of his forces, who to say the truth, made no conspicuous figure in that war. The King insisted on returning to Delhy and put his resolution in execution spite of Najhaf Khan's entreaties, who was desirous of making a further stay in those parts. When at Delhy, Najhaf Khan took his leave and he parted with great coolness from the court about December 1777.

From that time till April 1778, nothing material happened at the court, except underhand negotiations with the Matchery Rajah, who wanted to strengthen himself at that time, with the protection of the King and his minister; for that purpose he sent his Vakils to court in April, with a large retinue, and he made handsome proposals. They prevailed so far on the King as to engage him to take the field. But he did not go far. After having remained encamped about a month, at a place two coss from the city, the King returned and the Vakils soon after went back to their master. There seems to have been equal insincerity on both sides. Money was promised to the King I think two lacks on his first march, and four more at different stations but some objections started about the first payment, which never was compleated, cooled the court, and made them

think seriously of the consequences of an open rupture with Najhaf Khan on the bare word and promise of such a pitiful fellow as the Matchery Rajah. The great point however was, that the Rajah suspecting he was made a tool of by the minister would not part with his money without something for it, and seeing more earnestness from the court towards him. After the Vakil's departure, Abdulahd Khan made a merit of his proceedings with Najhaf Khan of his having endeavoured to drain the Matchery Rajah of his cash, and amused him a long while with vain hopes. However, there is no doubt but Najhaf Khan saw the truth of the whole transaction. Immediately after the rains in 1778, the King again took the field. The pretence was, to chastize some rebellious Zemindars who did not pay their rents, and a desire of the king to visit the shrine of a famous saint at Azmer. However, it is very probable the real motive was at first with a view to interfere with the Matchery Rajah, who was not yet brought to that distress, in which Najhaf Khan's treachery involved him afterward. The King with his army proceeded by slow marches, and reached Narnoul, the latter end of the year, which place is about 50 coss from Delhy on the high road to Joypore. A little before the King reached that place, intelligence was received, of the Matchery Rajah's catastrophe, which was far from being agreeable news to the court. However, the minister thought of making the best of it, and immediately on his side began to seize on the neighbouring purgunnahs which had heretofore been subject to that Rajah. The territory of Narnoul, formerly very rich, and considerable, and generally the apanage of some of the royal family, but of late occupied by the Rajah of Joypour, was also reduced without resistance. So that on the whole the King began to appear in a new light and to have thoughts of making conquests for himself, and with his own forces. Najhaf Khan was embarrassed how to act. The King's neighbourhood evidently interfered

with his affairs and was of great prejudice to him. He was summoned repeatedly to attend the royal camp, and the King declared his intentions of going to Joypour and from thence to Azmer to visit the tomb of a famous saint, called Khojah Mayn o din; his presence at court could not well be dispensed with, without tearing that veil which till now he had been studious to preserve, at least in appearance. Najhaf Khan therefore promised to join shortly, but in the meantime went on in securing as much as possible, the different provinces hitherto belonging to the Matchery Rajah, wherein he endeavoured to be beforehand with the minister.

In the interim the King continued his march towards Joypour and came within a few coss of it, about the middle of January 1779. The Rajah of that place was summoned to the presence, to pay his respects, and the usual Nazaranas. The regent Coshaliram who then managed the affairs of the young Rajah, was exceedingly embarrassed; he feared equally to trust himself entirely to the Court of Delhy, which would disoblige Najhaf Khan and was besides a step attended with some risk, from his weakness, and the enemies he had amongst the Rajepoots, many of whom had already joined the King: nor was it proper to offend the court by a refusal, which might be attended by immediate bad consequences. He therefore applied to Najhaf Khan and both he and the Rajah earnestly summoned him to their assistance.

Najhaf Khan who was not far distant, promised it, exchanged turbans with the young Rajah which in this country is reckoned a brotherly adoption and engaged him to temporise, and not to come to the presence till he himself had joined the King. The minister was therefore amused with repeated promises of the Rajah's coming, until Najhaf Khan himself joined the royal camp, which he did about the end of January. Najhaf Khan brought with him the

greatest part of his forces. He distrusted Abdulahd Khan, who on his side was not without his fears. Their meeting was however outwardly, as friendly as if they had ever been on the best of terms, so well can the Indian Princes conceal their real sentiments. Najhaf Khan also was well and honourably received by the King, tho: he took care not to trust too implicitly to appearances, but came to the King's tents strongly escorted by a large train well prepared for all events, which he had never done before. After the first meetings Najhaf Khan's superiour force and influence showed itself very plainly as well as his intentions. The minister was abandoned by the greatest part of those Rajepoots who had hitherto followed him, and who thought it the most prudent to pay their court to the strongest. The Rajah of Joypour and his regent would do nothing but thro: the channel of Najhaf Khan so that the minister saw himself obliged, also, to make his court there and to engage Najhaf Khan to have the honour of the King, by interfering and obliging the Rajah to come to the presence and agree on his Nazaranas.

To this Najhaf Khan assented and a convention was made thro: his interposition, by which the Rajah was to pay eight lacks of rupees Nazarana, then to have an audience, and afterwards to be permitted to remain in his capital. Of these eight lacks, two were afterwards deducted for damages done in the environs of the camp and during the marches of the armies, and of the six remaining, Najhaf Khan was to have two lacks for his share. So [illegible] the King's came only to 4 lacks. Of this 2 lacks were paid after many difficulties and numberless delays, that is, one lack in money, and one in various effects. As for the remaining two lacks, I believe they remain unpaid to this day, and must not be thought of any more. Najhaf Khan exclusive of that share had also private stipulations for himself and friends, and took that opportunity of pressing and obtaining the arrears

of the tribute of twelve lacks, which the regent had before agreed to pay him yearly, and to stipulate farther that a body of 3,000 horses from Joypour, should constantly attend him. In short, Najhaf Khan drew almost all the fruits of this campaign, for the minister engaged to return to the Rajepouts, Narnoul and the different purgunnahs he had occupied and wrested from them.

Never did Najhaf Khan's superiour influence and power, appear so conspicuous as at this time. The King's army exclusive of Letafit's corps was not inconsiderable. He had near 3 Battns of seapoys, besides about 7,000 foot and 2,000 horse, of one kind or another, exclusive of artillery. But from whatever cause it was, the court seemed to be grown quite passive, and to trust intirely to Najhaf Khan for everything. The purgunnahs taken from the Matchery Rajah, were most of them relinquished to Najhaf Khan who in compensation, promised to restore to the King Miret and the other purgunnahs he held belonging to the domains, ever since they were wrested from Zabeta Khan except two, occupied by Sumbre's party, for which he promised an equivalent. This was almost the only fruit the court gained from this expedition, together with the settlement of a few purgunnahs in the environs of Rewary, in the country called Mewat which had been for some years in a state of almost total independence and which were now brought to some account. The King's camp afterwards moved back towards Delhy. The voyage to Azmer being put off at Najhaf Khan's solicitations who represented the impropriety of it, and magnified the danger which might attend it, should the Rajpouts, joined to the Mahrattas, who occupied that Souban, think of opposing it, and of molesting the King on his march. Shortly after Najhaf Khan was permitted to quit the presence and proceed towards Alvar, where his affairs called him; and the King advanced by easy marches towards Delhy, which place he reached about the middle

of April last. Thus ended that campaign, in which the King got neither credit or profit, and which served only, to expose the weakness and want of power of the Court of Delhy, the insufficiency [inefficiency?] of the minister, and the superiour force and influence of Najhaf Khan. The army had hardly reached Delhy before the minister set on foot another expedition, however, the King this bout [?] could not be prevailed on to continue longer in the field; nevertheless, Abdulahd Khan was determined, and got the King to consent to one of the princes accompanying him; notwithstanding this eagerness, it seems at first the minister was in doubt which way he should bend his steps. The tents were sent towards Pannipput, afterwards back towards the river Jumnah and a bridge made over it, as if he meant to cross it, and go towards Miret and the Doab, and at last after those different changes, it was determined to proceed towards Pannipput, and the army now considerably increased from different Chiefs who finding encouragement resorted to Delhy from every parts, began to move forward on the twenty-fourth of June last.

To say precisely what is the minister's real intention in this expedition is not an easy matter. Great doings were to follow if the publick reports and his own declarations were to be credited. Some disputes had arisen betwixt Amer Sing (a powerful Zemindar bordering on the Siques, and himself a follower of their sect) and some of the neighbouring Chief's of the Siques. They fought, and Amer Sing was defeated. He then solicited help from the Court of Delhy. It was promised him on stipulating a valuable consideration. However, the succour was delayed so long, and appeared so precarious, that Amer Sing thought it most prudent to make his peace with his brethern. Matters were therefore compromised betwixt them at an expence of about two lacks of rupees, before the minister had marched from Delhy. However it did not prevent him from setting out on this favourite

expedition, and he now further gave out he meant to bring to reason, the purgunnahs of Sonput, Panniput, etc., part of the domains, which lay in his way to Amer Sing and did not pay the rents as they ought.

The army marched, sometimes it was given out, that Amer Sing was to join with all his forces, and the Siques were to be drove back from all the country on this side of Sirhind, at other times it was said the Siques were to join the army and an attack to be made jointly with them on Amer Sing, who was to be dispossessed of his country, which the minister and Siques were to divide. That the minister had both those projects in view, I doubt not, and would willingly have put one of them into execution. But neither the Siques or Amer Sing will be so unwise, as to coincide with him. Amer Sing kept aloof, and he has not yet thought proper to come to the presence, tho: strongly solicited, and invited in the most friendly manner, on the contrary, he is gone to near Lahore on pretence of a marriage, at the same time he has declared he had no more differences with the Siques, and that everything was accommodated betwixt them.

The Siques have also notwithstanding they had already began hostilities against the army's foraging parties, been invited to come and take service. They have not declined it, but insisted on the discharge of some arrears they claim, regular and punctual payments for the future, and stipulate it is said, not to fight against either Amer Sing, Najhaf Khan or Zabeta Khan. In this state stand the conferences at present.

The army is near Panniput, and it is evident it is not meant to act against the Siques, since several of their Chiefs have already been entertained in the minister's service to the number of above 3,000. As for Amer Sing, I believe it is meant to make him pay some money which in all likelyhood he will do. But as to reducing of him, I imagine it is more

than what the minister's army can do by itself, tho: numerous enough, if the Siques continue in their resolution of not joining in the attack. In the interim a design is formed by the minister against a petty Zemindar bordering on the Siques and on the purgunnahs of Pannipur who possesses a small territory of about 4 lacks of rupees per annum, and who seems equally on bad terms with Amer Sing and the Siques. For that purpose the army had moved towards him, but so slowly and cautiously, that I judge that business will also end in some pecuniary compromise.

There has been also for some time past a report spread that the minister has strongly solicited Zabeta Khan to join him with all his forces, and both together assisted by a number of Sique auxiliaries were to fall on the territory of Pattergurh across the Ganges (now in the hands of Asef al dowlah) and that Zabeta Khan had assented to the proposal provided Najhaf Khan to whom he was to write approved of it. I will in no shape vouch for the truth of this report, at the same time the ridicule of the intended attempt, is no reason whatever to set aside the likelyhood of the minister's having at least talked of such a scheme, or of having proposed it to Zabeta Khan; however, be it as it will, the minister who with his army is not far from the Jumnah on the eastern banks of which Zabeta Khan is encamped, has ordered boats to be collected from all parts to form a bridge to cross his army; such a step would intimate that all his schemes and projects against the Siques are at an end and that he has now other views. It may also be no more than a feint to cover another game. But whatever it is, I am convinced the old adage of *mons parturiens nascitur ridiculus mus*[sic] will be applicable to him and his manœuvres.

Perhaps the minister has intentions of recovering from Najhaf Khan those purgunnahs the latter farms from

the King,and for which he has not been very punctual in his payments; as they are all situate in the Doab, it may be the true cause of the present movement and that the report above related has only been spread by the minister, with a view, of raising his own reputation with his own people, occasioning some remonstrances on the part of Asef al dowlah and afterwards showing his condescension in desisting from an enterprise, he is after all, too wise I think, to have ever thought of in earnest, or at least on cool reflexion intended to execute. If such is his design, he is to be commended for at last exerting himself in putting the royal domains on a proper footing which ought to be done previously to the undertaking anything outwards. But even this point, which is not very great in itself, I question whether he will dare put in execution, for notwithstanding the hatred he bears to Najhaf Khan he has been constantly very cautious hitherto, of breaking openly with him, which in all likelyhood would happen, was the minister to resume the purgunnahs farmed by Najhaf Khan against the latter's consent.

On the otherhand it must be said that the minister has a difficult game to play: that both Najhaf Khan and Zabeta Khan instead of joining him and acting in concert against the Siques, have refused to come under various pretences, and on the contrary encourage the Siques underhand to oppose him. That besides they constantly counteract all the minister's schemes for the publick good, and whatever may tend to the honour and welfare of the King, whom they do all in their power to keep in as dependent a state as possible, barely leaving him wherewith to subsist, and that thus situated it is not to be wonder'd at, if as a last resource, the minister has in the end, thought of raising forces and endeavouring amongst so many independent rebellious neighbours to secure some of the ancient domains of the empire. Such are Abdulahd Khan's plans and general

reasons for this expedition, but tho: they are plausible and not without some foundation, yet if I am not mistaken, some secret motives, had also their due shares in engaging him to raise such considerable forces, and in undertaking an enterprise which considering the powerful neighbours he is surrounded with, does not promise him much success. Those motives I'll endeavour to develop.

While the King was encamped near Joypour, news were received of the bad success of the English troops in their attack on the Mahrattas in the Deccan. This check was greatly magnified and exaggerated with many circumstances which represented it as a total overthrow. The peace which was patched up in consequence, was also not forgot, and the Mahratta Chiefs elated with their success, promised themselves no less, than full security for themselves at home, and a speedy opportunity of returning to this part of India, which has long been the favourite scene of their rapacious excursions.

They accordingly wrote both to Najhaf Khan and the Court of Delhy, gave a pompous account of their victory, and promised soon to follow their Vaquils, with all their forces and to come to the Upper Provinces with a full determination of taking a part in the affairs of the empire of crushing the enemies of the King and those who had so long ruled unmolested in these parts, and taken advantage of their absence, etc. Some flattering expressions towards the King and his minister, (Kings absolutely of course [?] in such correspondence and in this country) raised the hopes of a court, ready to catch at the smallest shadow of assistance, and made them imagine the Mahrattas were already at the gates, and that thro: their means the King's affairs would once more bear a favourable aspect. This illusion was further countenanced by false accounts received of the Mahratta army's being on its march, and already advanced to near the river Nurbuddah, and by the Vaquils whose

interest it was to place their master's intentions and power in the most favourable point of view for the court. The minister catched[?] at this, his behaviour from that time was much altered from what it had been before, he prepared rich Khelats of various sorts, wrote the most flattering congratulatory letters to the Mahratta Chiefs, whom he earnestly invited to come. It was further publickly asserted that the minister proposed to take for himself from the King, the investiture of the office of Vizir, on the arrival of the Mahrattas, and that the King joined by Najhaf Khan and accompanied by all the Mahratta forces, were to fall on the territory of Asef al dowlah.

Such were the current reports on the King's arrival at Delhy, in April last, and tho: they ought not to be intirely credited, being unsupported by positive proofs, nevertheless from several coincident circumstances, there is great reason to think, there was something of the kind in agitation. The minister certainly at that time began to raise forces and the Khelat of Vizir was prepared. Very rich Khelats also were delivered to the Mahratta Vakils for their masters in the Deccan, and some money for them to defray the charges of their journey there, more however, was still wanting and promised from the minister. But in the interim certain news were received that the Mahrattas were still in the Deccan, that the peace would not be ratified and that the Mahrattas would soon have work enough on their hands at home, to prevent their thinking of coming to these parts.

These accounts made the minister alter his tone. The Khelat of Vizir was set aside, and tho: he could not recall those he had already delivered to the Vakils of the Mahrattas, nevertheless he would not furnish them any more money and I believe heartily repented he had gone so far as he had already done. But it was too late, he had collected together a considerable number of troops with a view of appearing of some consequence before the Mahrattas. Those

lay heavy on his hands, and now to have disbanded them. would have too much opened his game. He was therefore forced to think of some way of employing them, and accordingly notwithstanding the season he took the field as has been related.

Such I verily believe have been the motives which have influenced the minister, to raise the forces he has. For however sanguine he may be in his expectations of conquest and hope of imitating and rivalling Najhaf Khan, he cannot I think be so blinded as not to see how vastly different times and circumstances are at present, from those which were so favourable to Najhaf Khan, setting intirely aside the personal qualifications which in Najhaf Khan are those of a hardly soldier and a bold adventurer, but in Abdulahd Khan are only those of a cabinet politician. Besides which motives, as there is some reason to think Najhaf Khan will soon be able to compromise matters one way or another with the Matchery Rajah, and that in such a case he proposes to fall immediately on the Siques with all his forces. It is not improbable that the minister wishes to have it in his power then, to join himself with him and come in for a share in the territories which will be recovered from those plunderers, and which he could neither obtain or keep afterwards, without a considerable force. All those causes have no doubt coincided in bringing the minister to act as he has.

Abdulahd Khan has now with him in the field near six Battns. of seapoys, four of which are compleat, and the two others made up of detached Companies, about 7. or 8,000 foot more and 6,000 horse, exclusive of the mercenary Siques and the allies. He has also a considerable train of artillery, tho: none of the best, and he is daily increasing it. This force which I have put down much lower than the publick reports make it, is far greater than all the revenues of the domains in present possession everything

included could defray. It must therefore be a matter of surprise how the minister can find means to subsist such an army, and at the same time be still able to answer the demands and necessary charges of the King's household, etc. It is true the troops are ill-paid and much in arrears, and as for the King's immediate servants they are happy if in a year they can get 4 or even 2 months' pay. Nevertheless the real expences are still far beyond the full revenues, and the minister must have had recourse to his private treasury to be able to maintain such a force. As for the King, however willing Abdulahd Khan may be to make him bear a share in the extraordinary expence, I am convinced he will not of his own accord or without force be brought to pay for it out of his private coffers which if fame is to be credited are said not to be empty.

The King's possessions are confined mostly to the environs of Delhy and the whole may amount to about 70 purgunnahs great and small; the full revenues of which, were they duly settled, carefully managed and secured from the ravages of the Siques, would not amount to less than 50 lacks of rupees and perhaps to 60 per annum But they are very far from being brought to that point of culture or safety, and I believe if I state the real revenue from those purgunnahs at 20 lacks it is the utmost the King has received for some years past out of them. It is true this sum is exclusive of the jaguirs granted to the princes, the minister and some of the Omrahs of the court, which tho: they are not considerable, still they all together make a sum of at least twelve lacks more. In that number of 70 purgunnahs are included several which Najhaf Khan had appropriated to himself and for which he pays little or nothing, also the others in the Doab in a fine situation which are farmed by Affrasiab Khan in Najhaf Khan's name at little more than half their real value and yet it is not without difficult and some discounts the amount is paid.

Such are the King's domains and revenues, very inadequate, I will not say to his dignity, but even barely to his own personal expences, and rendered still less by the rapacity and ingratitude of Najhaf Khan who not satisfied with breaking his word with the King, with whom he had solemnly agreed to share all his conquests, has even layd hold of several purgunnahs which were from the first in the King's possession, and appropriated them to his own use under the most frivolous pretences. Najhaf Khan has of late, it is true, restored some of them, after having enjoyed their produce for a couple of years. But nevertheless he still detains many, and nothing keeps him from doing worse, except the fear of too much irritating the court and tearing that veil he has all along studied to preserve, not in reality, but at least in appearance.

Perhaps Najhaf Khan would act better was he not so much behind hand with his troops, and at times forced to consent to their most pressing demands, which never leave him either money in his treasury, or even revenues that are not mortgaged long before they can be collected; however as he goes on, it is not likely that he will ever be more at his ease, or less rapacious, for he never refuses entertaining troops let them be ever so numerous or come from what quarter they may and they are sure of meeting with a good reception from him, and if they are a compact somewhat powerful body, certain of obtaining almost all they can wish.

The King Shah Alum's court never was even in the best times very brilliant, however, while with Shoujah al dowlah or at Ellahabad, there was still an appearance of ease and some grandeur, which at present is much diminished. Few or no Omrahs are left of any figure, those that may remain having nothing of their own, and little from the King, keep up no rank and are daily dwindling away. The Nabob Abdulahd Khan is the only one of the ancient Omrahs, who has had the good luck or policy of preserving

what his ancestors or himself had secured in better times, and so that no doubt together with his abilities he is indebted for his post.

He has enjoyed it now near 5 years and his favour has been daily increasing; notwithstanding the ill successes the various attempts he has made to retrieve the King's authority have constantly met with, he seems now more fixed than ever in the King's good graces, and he rules with absolute sway. From the first he appears to have acted with great caution and with seeming attention and regard to the King's interests. He kept in their different posts all those servants of the King, who occupied them on his promotion, or if he found fault with them it appeared to be more from his desire of putting greater order in the publick affairs, than from a wish of turning them out, and filling their places with his creatures.

Nevertheless of late he seems to have adopted less disinterested measures. He has by degrees dispersed all the ancient troops and those that were from long and approved services attached to the King, and he has raised new ones entirely devoted to him and commanded by his creatures dependents. But all this has been done so warily and by such roundabout ways, that the King, who has always been noted for the blindest confidence in whatever persons have been honoured by him with the post of minister, has not opened his eyes on his conduct and on the contrary seems daily further inclined to trust himself and all his affairs more implicitly to his discretion.

How far this may be carried, it is difficult to say, while the minister, supplies the King's necessary personal expences, and those incurred by his women, without demanding anything from his private purse, I dare say the King will be happy in the thoughts of having such a servant and that Abdulahd Khan will continue to have as he has, a *carte blanche,* and the greatest favour. But should any ill

success, or strong opposition, oblige Abdulahd Khan to return to Delhy, without having provided for the payment of his numerous noble, and they grow too clamorous on him, and should he on this think of applying to the King for some help to satisfy them, there is no doubt but his majesty would be obliged to comply, for it would be out of his power to help himself; but then an end would be effectually put to that confidence which has hitherto subsisted between them.

I will not say positively that such an event will take place, but many incidents that have lately taken place seem to have paved the way for something of the kind. The guards that were formerly instrusted with the care of the fortress, occupied by the King, have been all turned out, and new people devoted to the minister have been sent to relieve them. The King is surrounded by spies of every kind and should unfortunately any of his servants happen to drop any word tending to show a disapprobation of the minister's measures, his ruin and disgrace is surely the immediate consequence of his rashness. Thus all tremble before the minister, who still the better to secure himself and be informed of even what passes in the interior apartments of the palace, the approach of which is forbidden not only to men but even eunuchs, has within this fortnight past, got the King to consent to the bestowing on the mother of Coutub odin Khan his son-in-law, the office of *maildarny* which gives her entrance into all the apartments of the seraglio and of course an opportunity of knowing what passes there, and if any secret correspondence is carried on to his prejudice.

Thus by imperceptible degrees, but with great steadiness, the minister has so far secured every avenue to the King, that tho: the latter should be tempted to wish for his removal, yet he cannot possibly effect it or even attempt it, without putting himself intirely in his power. Those

manœuvres have occasioned a suspicion that the minister has a design to oblige the King sooner or later, to spare him something from his private treasure, and afterwards to secure himself from a fall such as that of his predecessor, (whose disgrace began also from having made the King disburse money) by force and spite of all the machinations of his enemies, which certainly it is now in his power to do, for he has the sole uncontrouled management not only of all the troops but also of all the revenues.

Whether the King has at last opened his eyes on a conduct which is so glaring and so threatening, I know not: some say he has, and that in consequence Najhaf Khan has been wrote to privately, to come and relieve him from his situation. However it is certain he has appeared displeased lately at some of the measures taken by the minister and his son-in-law Coutub odin Khan who during his absence manages all the affairs at court in his stead. But his displeasure has not prevented his complying with whatever has been demanded of him from which I conclude that the minister's influence is as great as ever, and will continue so to the end, except he should be necessitated to ask or force money from the King, the stumbling block of his predecessors.

Such is the Court of Delhy and the aspect it bears at present and here it is necessary I should give you a sketch of the King's person and describe his character and conduct in private life, that I may leave nothing unsaid relative to that prince which may make him known more particularly to you. Shah Alum is about 50 years of age, of a strong frame and good constitution, his size above the middling and his aspect tho: generally with a melancholy cast has a good deal of sweetness and benignity in it, which cannot but interest the beholder in his favour. His deportment in publick is grave and reserved, but on the occasion full of graciousness and condescension. Indulgent to his

servants, easily satisfied with their services, he seldom finds fault with them, or takes notice of any neglect they may be guilty of. A fond father, he has the greatest attachment for his children, whom yet he keeps agreeable to the usage of the court, under great subordination and restriction.

He is also strictly devout and an exact observer of the ceremonies of his religion, tho: it must be owned, not without a strong scent of superstition. He is well versed in the Persic and Arabic languages, particularly the former, and is not ignorant of some of the dialects of India, in which he often amuses himself in composing verses and songs. That he wants neither courage or spirit has been often put to the proof, and he has more than once had severe trials of his constancy and fortitude, all which he bore with a mind and temper that did him infinite credit, and which in all likelyhood would have been of essential service to him in those pursuits in which he was engaged, from the time he was forced to fly from Delhy; had he not at the same time from the first reposed too implicit a confidence in his ministers, and generally suffered his own better opinion to give way to that of a servant, often influenced by very different motives, from those, which such a confidence should have dictated. But this has always been Shah Alum's foible, partly owing to indolence and partly to his unsuspicious mind, which prevents him from seeing any design in the flattery of a sicophant and makes him take for attachment to his person what is nothing more than a design to impose on him and obtain his confidence. Indeed, two of the King's greatest faults are his great fondness of flattery, however gross, and the too unreserved confidence he places in his ministers. The first he has in common with all the Indian princes, who are to a man so little accustomed to hear truth, that it cannot fail being offensive from whatever quarter it may come. But the second is peculiar to him. It has nevertheless been observed, that his favour

however full and without bounds it may be during the time the favourite remains in place, vanishes almost instantly, the moment it is become necessary to remove him, and the minister finds himself, after having enjoyed the most unlimited favour and confidence, at once forgotten and given up, with as much indifference as if he had never been known by the King.

From this it may be judged, Shah Alum has no great sincerity in these attachments and that his favour is more the effect of his dislike of affairs, and indolence, than the result of a similitude of sentiments or cordial affection for the person. Besides that, he is not an inveterate irreconcilable enemy, but at the same time he is very apt to forget the services he may have received, to consider only the present without any regard to the past, and to sacrifice to the caprice of his favourite any one, tho: ever so sincerely attached to his interests, who may happen to be grown disagreeable to him. This shows a great weakness in the King, and it must be confessed that it has more than once, been carried so inexcusable lengths and which appear the more extraordinary, as it cannot be said to be for want of good sense or knowing better.

Tho: in publick the King is in general very reserved, nevertheless at times, when there is only his ordinary courtiers and attendants, he is apt to talk too unguardedly, and in such terms, as cannot but hurt his cause, should they be carried abroad, which is generally the case. The above together with an inordinate love of women and a strong propensity to ease and indolence, form the less shining parts of Shah Alum's character, from which may be inferred, that tho: he cannot be called a great or wise king, nevertheless, on the whole he must be allowed to have many qualities, that would intitle him in private life to the character of a good and benevolent man.

The King has a very numerous family, above 500 women

and nearly 70 children male or female, besides grand-children, and exclusive of those that have died. However, most of those children are very young and not above 5 or 6 of them are in their manhood, The rest are of all ages from 14 to the lowest, and never a year passes without several births. The King has a great affection for all, but particularly his 3rd son Mirzah Acbar Shah, and a daughter he married lately to one of his nephews. Those two are great favourites.

Mirzah Jewan buchkt otherwise called Jehandar Shah is the eldest of the King's children, and was the prince who after the murder of his grand father Alumguir Sany and the confinement of Shah Jehan Sany by the Mahrattas, after Gazy odin Khan's flight, was put on the throne at Delhy as *locum tenens* for his father, in which state he remained until the King's return. He is about 27 years of age, middlesized, strong, and well made, of a pleasing open countenances, full of fire tho: mixed with sweetness, rather too free and unreserved in his deportment. He does not always maintain that dignity he ought, and discovers his sentiments on affairs perhaps too freely for his future welfare. He has however of late put on a greater reserve, no doubt in consequence of some admonition from his well wishers. He is much attached to the King, who places great confidence in him, but it is said he is not a hearty friend of the minister in his heart, tho: he keeps up appearances with great attention. He is expensive and not very exact in modelling his expences on his revenues, which are not very considerable. He is also very fond of pleasure and women and much inclined to indulge himself freely in the pursuit of them.

Such is the heir apparent of the empire and tho: he certainly possesses more activity and fire than his father or grandfather ever did, nevertheless he does not seem to me to have a sufficient share to enable him, to overcome

the obstacle which have prevented the late descendants of Timur from recovering and enjoying the extensive dominions and power that for so many years had been the apanage of their ancestors. On the contrary, it is but too probable, that he will soon sink under that sensual indolence which has proved so fatal to the last six emperors.

His next brother Mirzah Forkhonda buchkt, or Shah Jehan is about twenty-four years of age, very tall and rather thin, of a pleasing and noble aspect, tho: with a cast of melancholy and reserve. He is the only one of the King's children that is born of a princess, but in this country it does not give him any pre-eminence over the eldest born. He is very mild in his deportment, seems to love retirement, very easy to be satisfied, and in no shape expensive on himself. Attentive to his own private affairs he retains no more servants, than such as he can regularly pay and maintain, and he is punctually strict in giving them their wages so soon as due: having often been known to sell some of his jewels etc. to effect it, rather than delay them. His pleasant temper also has made the minister with whom he is at present in the field, prefer him to his elder brother for the campaign, as being much easier to be satisfied, and far less presumptuous than the other. There he is kept as a shadow of a King, without the smallest authority, and so strictly watched and observed that he was not more confined when within the walls of the seraglio; a great friendship subsists betwixt the two elder brothers, from their having always been together ever since their infancy.

Mirzah Acbar Shah is the next in age to the last, but the first in the King's affections. He is about 20 years old, middle sized, and has a good deal of the King's air and mien, tho: mixed with some dullness. The attachment and sympathy betwixt the King and him is remarkable. They cannot be asunder, and the son sleeps in the same room

with his father, with only a screen betwixt them. They eat also together in the same dish, and what pleases one, is agreeable to the other. But the most singular point is that whenever one of the two falls sick, the other soon or immediately after is laid up also, and obliged to take to his bed. In short nothing can equal the love and affection they bear to each other and which I believe comes a good deal from a similitude of temper and affections of the mind. However, tho: Acbar Shah is so great a favourite of his father, it is not observed that the King's regard for him has ever carried him to do anything in his favour, which might in the end prejudice the rights of the eldest son. On the contrary, the eldest always enjoys all the prerogatives of primogeniture and seems to have a cordial affection for Mirzah Acbar Shah. The rest of the King's children live too retired a life to be well known, and all of them that are of a proper age, are kept constantly to their studies and watched with the greatest caution. Such is the royal family at this time, and tho: it is difficult to form a judgment of princes in a state of dependence, nevertheless from all that may be collected of their present deportment, I believe it may be affirmed, that few or no princes in India can vye with any of the royal persons above named, not only in acquired qualifications, but also in those qualities of the mind, generally the gift of nature, and consequent to a good and virtuous education. I must only except the love of women and of pleasure. But this seems to be the foible of the House of Timur and has greatly contributed to its decadence and fall, tho: at the same time, justice must acknowledge, that their indulgence in them, is natural, and not disgraced by the scandalous and beastly practices that cast such ignominy on most if not all others of the Indian princes.

It remains now I should say something of the prime minister Abdulahd Khan, otherwise called Mujhed al dowlah. But I doubt I shall find it a task of no small

difficulty to do him proper justice, so complicate is his character.

Abdulahd Khan is descended of ancesters who for two or three generations have been servants of the Kings, and enjoyed posts of trust and emolument. His father Abdul musjhid Khan, was Diwan Khalsah to Mahomed Shah and had great power and influence at court during the latter part of that King's reign; at his death, tho: Abdulahd Khan did not succeed him in his post, nevertheless he kept several of his jaghuirs and during the troubles and anarchy that ensued, had the art of maintaining himself at Delhy, with all the different Chiefs that in turn had possession of that capital, if not in a state of power, at least in security, which considering the various interests he had to manage, the rapacity of those Chiefs, and their continual contests, was a task of the greatest difficulty, and requiring the most consummate policy to effect. Gazy odin Khan was the only one whose confidence he could not gain, and Abdulahd Khan would have fallen a sacrifice to his malice, had not his good fortune saved him. He got timely intelligence of Gazy odin Khan's intentions against his life, and escaped by a speedy flight after having secured his most precious effects.

Soon after Gazy odin Khan was obliged to abandon Delhy and Abdulahd Khan returned. There he was when in the year 1772, the King reached his capital, living on the produce of his jaguirs and the savings of his father. He soon began to lay himself out for some great post and endeavoured to ingratiate himself with the King by every way in his reach. He also joined interests with Najhaf Khan, the Nazer Monsour Aly Khan and some other Omrahs, dissatisfied with Issam al dowlah then prime minister. A revolution was brought about, as has been seen above, and Abdulahd Khan placed as minister by Najhaf Khan.

From this period he daily increased in power and influence and I believe few instances can be brought of so unlimited a confidence as that placed by the King in him.

Abdulahd Khan is at least 60 years of age, and was it not for a defect in one of his eyes, would pass for a well-looking man. But that blemish makes him appear rather unfavourably. He is well-versed in the usual studies of well educated Omrahs in India, and particularly in epistolary correspondence, which may be said to be his most favourite employment. He is wary and cunning, full of artifice and disguise, all which he endeavours to conceal by an affected openness and by a behaviour seemingly inconsequent. This however, is not difficult to be seen through, by indifferent persons. But where Abdulahd Khan has a design to carry, or some point to gain, then his art appears in its full force, and he seldom fails of bringing about his purpose. For this he spares nothing, oaths, promises, the most flattering and endearing expressions and protestations, small trifling presents, joined to a behaviour so attentive and so apparently affectionate, that he generally, very soon, removes every bad impression which his former duplicity and his general character might have raised against him. In this particularly his great art appears; he does nothing, nor enters into any scheme without so managing his actions and correspondence, as to have it in his power, at any time afterwards, to turn the business, and make his conduct in it, appear favourable on either side, as future circumstances or the event, should make it necessary. In this he excels and that barefaced effrontery with which the great men of India can lie and forswear themselves, is nowhere so conspicuous (Najhaf Khan excepted) as in Abdulahd Khan.

To all these political abilities and qualities he joins a great share of pride, which however he knows how to repress on the occasion. He is vindictive and unforgiving, but appears neither cruel or bloody-minded. He loves

money, yet he can part with it freely to forward his views. Extreamely fond of flattery, he swallows the grossest and will take offence if it is not offered. He is withal mistrustful in the highest degree and nothing but the most slavish and abject attendance can make him form a good opinion of any one.

Such is Abdulahd Khan; his confidence is chiefly divided betwixt two of his menial servants, whom he has step by step raised from the lowest, and if the publick voice is to be credited, the vilest offices about his person, to the highest in the state. They are called Beyram Couly Khan and Imam bucksh and are both as ignorant and illiterate as men of such a stamp usually are.

Byram Couly Khan has long enjoyed his master's favour, is certainly attached to him, and wants not good sense. He has under his charge the greatest part of the minister's household and commands in Delhy during his absence.

As for Imam bucksh his favour is of later date, tho: it seems to be now far greater than the other's. He is milder in his deportment than Beyram Couly, more insinuating and equally attached to the minister, who seems to take a pleasure in raising him and augmenting his influence. He commands now under him all the forces and keeps a far more sumptuous appearance than any of the princes, who certainly have it not in their power to spend one quarter of what he does. Those two are the pillars of the state and the channels of all favours and applications, which stand no chance except when supported by one of them and well paid for.

Besides those there is the minister's son-in-law, Coutub odin Khan a young man of about 24 years of age, who is employed in the different affairs and conferences with the King which the minister cannot attend himself; setting aside his origin, which he derives from men of rank and

power, his chief merit is his alliance with Abdulahd Khan's daughter being in every other respect a trifling insignificant youth.

I have thus endeavoured to give you some idea of the Court of Delhy from the year 1771 to the present time, and to lay open the principal characters in it. I have purposely omitted saying anything particular of the King's griefs, not only against the nation, but also against Asef al dowlah and Najhaf Khan, they shall make the subject of another, in which I shall occasionally take up subjects which I neglected before, that I might not too much interrupt the thread of my relation.

NOTES

NOTES

Page 21. *Issam al dowlah*—One of Shah Alam's advisers; ". . . . some men of mean capacities and vile inclinations, found means to recommend themselves to that Prince. These were Hessameddin-qhan, Radja Ramnat, and Bahadyr-aaly-qhan; three men, who being of the same turn of mind, and having the same inclinations with Shah-aalam, soon found their way to his heart; Hessam-eddin-qhan, especially who having made it a point to procure pretty virgins and agreeable young women from all parts, which he got instructed in the accomplishments of dancing and singing used to present to the Emperor . . . soon became one of the principal Lords of the Court and one who acted as a Minister of State."—*Seir Mutaqherin*, iv, pp. 26-7.

Page 21. *Monir al dowlah*—Chief adviser of Shah Alam at Allahabad, a favourite of the English, accompanied Shah Alam upto Bithur in his journey to Delhi; ". . . . the person who had taken possession of the Imperial mind, was Munnir-ed-dowlah, who under the modest name of Steward of the Imperial household, had become in fact his Prime Minister."—*Seir Mutaqherin*, iv, p. 26.

Page 22. *"gave him a considerable sum of money"*—"he supplied ten lakhs in cash, besides carriages, tents and other necessary articles".—Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughul Empire*, ii, p. 554.

Page 22. *"the business was concluded for 5 lakhs of Rupees"* Francklin says, "a paishcush of four lacks of rupees" was agreed.—*Shah Aulum*, p. 35. According to Sarkar, six lakhs were agreed "on condition of Ahmad's son Muzaffar Jang being recognised as Nawab of Furukhabad and conferred in his father's

estates''.—*Fall of the Mughul Empire*, ii, p. 554. According to Irvine, "there being no money in the treasury, the Bakhshi melted down all the silver of the *howdahs* and other furniture and sold it for three lakhs of rupees. This sum with seven elephants and eleven horses was presented to the Emperor. One lakh of rupees was obtained by Najaf Khan for arranging a settlement."—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, xlviii, p. 154.

Two sons of Ahmad Khan survived him, Daler Himmat Khan who succeeded his father and was known as Muzaffar Jang ; the other son Dil Daler Khan settled in Benares about 1786 and subsequently believed to have committed suicide.—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, xlviii, pp. 159-60.

Page 23. *Nabigunge* (Nabiganj)—village on Grand Trunk Road, district Mainpuri, U.P.

Page 23. *Bissagie* (Visaji Krishna Biniwala)—one of Peshwa's generals posted in Rohilkhand ; subsequently played important part in the war against Raghunath Rao.

Page 23. *"latter end of December 1771"*—Shah Alam "rode into his capital at a quarter past eight on Monday the sixth of January".—Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughul Empire*, ii, p. 555. Francklin, however, almost agrees with the date in the manuscript. "On the 25th of December, 1771, Shah-Aulum made his entry into the capital."—*Shah Aulum*, p. 37.

Page 24. *Tuckoo*—Tukaji Holker.

Page 24. *Soukertal* (Shakartal)—a fort on the western bank of the Ganges.

Page 25. *"a ford was discovered"*—"The Marathas passed that river by the foot at Corrimboss-gaut"—Hamilton, *Rohilla Afgans*, p. 173.

Page 25. *Pattergurh*—fort of Najibabad, also known as Najafgarh.

Page 25. *Shawabad*—Shahabad in Hardoi district, U.P.

Page 25. *"the troops of the Brigade."*—Company's troops. The Marathas were naturally offended at Shuja-ud-daula's attempts to come to an agreement with the Rohillas through the mediation of the English.

Page 28. *Madec*—also spelt Madoc. One of the earliest foreign adventurers in India, "Madoc was an illiterate and ignorant Frenchman who had formerly been a private in the French army in South India, from which he deserted in 1774 and found his way to Delhi, where he entered the service of Najaf Khan . . . ." Compton, *European Military Adventurers of Hindusthan*, p. 371.

Page 33. *"even this was not granted"*.—Francklin does not mention this, but refers to Tukaji's mediation and Najaf Khan being "graciously received by his majesty, honoured with a Khellut, and appointed to the Command of the army".—*Shah Aulum*, p. 45.

Page 33. *Altumgah*—literally, red stamp. "a royal grant . . . conferring a title to rent free land in perpetuity, hereditary and transferable".—Wilson's *Glossary*.

Page 33. *"and a brigade"*—"the first brigade of the English army then stationed at Dinapore took the field in the beginning of A.D. 1773 under the command of Brigadier-General Sir Robert Barker, and marched into the province of Owde . . . ."—Hamilton, *Rohilla Afgans*, p. 187.

Page 33. *"Najhaf Khan took the first opportunity"*.—There are following entries in Captain Macpherson's journal,—

"May 4th (1773). The Marratoes are preparing to recross the Jumna, and Najif Cawn and Zabbidy Cawn to part with them . . . .

9th. This evening Najif Cawn came into camp and paid the General a visit. 11th, Nazif Cawn paid the Col. a visit, which the Col. returned."—Macpherson, *Soldiering in India*, pp. 125—26.

Page 35. *Narrative of Najhaf Khan*—evidently refers to another work. See Introduction.

Page 35. *Abdul ahad Khan*—better known as Mujid-ud-daulah.

Page 36. *"Agra . . . . fell into Najhaf Khan's hands"*—Polier himself played an important part in the capture of Agra. The details are omitted for reasons best known to him. See Introduction.

Page 36. *"Ellitch Khan arrived in Delhy"*.—Muhammad Illich Khan, Shuja-ud-daula's adviser, became Asaf-ud-daula's minister after Murtaza Khan's death. For a detailed account, see Francklin's *Shah Aulum*, pp. 52—54.

Page 36. *Hafiz Rhaimut*—born about 1710, was appointed guardian to Ali Mahammad's sons. In 1754, he appropriated the territories entrusted to his care, joined Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1760 and received Etawah from him after the battle of Panipat, signed with other Rohilla chiefs a treaty of alliance with Shuja-ud-daulah against the Marathas, subsequently entered into a treaty with the Marathas promising passage to Oudh and a sum of money; killed in the battle of Miranpur Katra on 23 April 1774.

Page 38. *'In his Narrative'*—refers to Najaf Khan's Narrative.

Page 38. *Bissowly* (Bisauli)—23 miles from Budaun. About 1750, Dundi Khan the Rohilla Chieftain "occupied the large fort which still stands to the north west, between Asafpur and Chandausi roads . . . . Dundi Khan built several houses in Bisauli, which remained in the possession of his descendants till the mutiny, when most of them were confiscated for rebellion."—*District Gazetteer of United Provinces*, xv, pp. 174—5.

Page 39. *Selimgarh*—situated north east of Red Palace, built by Sher Shah's son Salim Shah.

Page 39. *Cassim Aly Khan*—In the letter to Colonel Ironside, dated 22 May 1776, Polier referred to Mir Qasim's arrival near Delhi. "Cassim Aly Khan after several

adventures and flying from one place to another has at last taken up his residence at Pulwall a small town, 20 coss from hence, on the high road from Agra to Delhi". See Appendix. See also letter from Bengal Government to Court of Directors, dated 24 August 1774, referring to a report that Shah Alam had invited Mir Qasim to his Court.—Quoted in Strachey's *Rohilla War*, p. 154.

Page 40. *Najhibabad*—town in Bijnore District, founded by Najib-ud-daula.

Page 40. *Amroe* (Amroha)—The town is situated 19 miles northwest of Moradabad. It is an old site and according to tradition was re-built by Amba, the sister of Prithiraj. Under Akbar the pargana contributed a military force of 1,000 cavalry, 5,000 infantry and 50 elephants.—*District Gazetter of United Provinces*, xvi.

Page 41. *Sadet Aly Khan*—Mirza Saadat Ali Khan, Shuja-ud-daula's second son, believed to be more efficient than his brother. He fled from Oudh, joined Najaf Khan and subsequently took shelter in British territory. After Asaf-ud-daula's death he was placed on the throne by Sir John Shore.

Page 42. *Murtaza Khan*—Mukhtar-ud-daula Murtaza Khan, Asaf-ud-daulah's favourite, supplanted Illich Khan after Shuja-ud-daula's death and was promoted to the rank of 7,000, "the real ruler of the country, planned widespread reforms in the administration" was murdered in 1776.—Davies, *Warren Hastings and Oudh*, pp. 86—93.

"He was responsible for disintigration and disorder" in the state, appointed his own relatives, and "upset" the administration.—Basu, *Oudh and East India Company*, p. 6. For a full account of the murder see Polier's narrative in the Appendix.

Page 43. *"Abdul Cassim, a first cousin of the minister"*—He was more correctly the "younger brother of Ahad".

Page 43. *15 March 1776*—Sir Jadunath gives a different date: "The fatal encounter took place at Anninagar eight miles N. W. of Muzaffarnagar on the 11th of the month".—Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughul Empire*, iii, p. 133.

Page 44. *Latafit Ali*—"favourite eunuch and General in service of Nawab Asaf-ud-daula . . . . sent in command of contingent destined to assist Shah Alam (q. v) in 1775. He was captured and blinded by Mirza Shafi in 1783."—Beale, *Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, p. 226.

Page 45. *"Thus ended the contest. . . ."*—does not mention the siege of Ghausgarh in September 1777.

Page 45. *Rahim Dat Khan*—Rohilla Chief, entered the service of Najaf Khan and defeated Nawab Singh Jat in the battle of Barsana in 1773. See Qanungo, *History of the Jats*, pp. 257—270, 277—280, 284—286.

Page 47. *Gind*—Rohtak district, Punjab. "In 1765 Gajapat Singh, the first Raja of the house of Jind. . . . . . settled at Jind and Safidon, hardly 20 miles distant from the north-western corner of the Gohana tahsil. From these places he constantly invaded the Hissar and Rohtak territory. . ."—*Gazetteer of the Rohtak District*, p. 19.

Page 48. *Najhaf Couly Khan*—Mirja Najaf Khan's slave and lieutenant, allied with Afrasiyab Khan after Najaf Khan's death and was imprisoned by Muhammad Shafi in September 1782.

Page 50. *"The campaign against Zabeta Khan . . . narratives"*—probably this explains why the siege of Ghausgarh is not mentioned.

Page 52. *"Shrine of a famous saint at Azmer"*—refers to the tomb of Muinuddin Chisti. The shrine is a "remarkable building, and is an object of pilgrimage to Muhammadans from all parts of the world. The shrine contains a mosque of Akbar, another by Shah Jahan and numerous more modern sacred buildings . . . . The saint's tomb is richly adorned with gold

and silver . . . ."—*Rajputana District Gazetteers*, 1 A, pp. 17-18.

Page 54. "*Eight lakhs of rupees* . . . ."—Francklin's figures are different. He mentions Pratap Singh offering five lakhs of rupees.—*Shah Aulam*, p. 85. Sarkar says, Pratap Singh "presented a peshkash of two lakhs, and his tribute was settled by mutual agreement at 20 lakhs".—*Fall of the Mughul Empire*, iii, p. 171.

Page 56. "*One of the princes*. . ."—Farkhunda Bakht (Mirza Jahan Shah).

Page 57. "*It is not meant to act against the Sikhs*"—It did in fact act against the Sikhs. The imperial troops won a victory over Amar Singh on 7 October, but could make no impression before Patiala, and threatened by Amar Singh and his allies were forced to a retreat. Evidently the manuscript was finished before the action of 7 October.

Page 58. "*A design is formed* . . . *against a petty zemindar*"—Probably refers to Gajpat Singh. "A lesser Phulkia Sikh Gajpat Singh founded in 1764 the state of Jhind."—Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughul Empire*, iii, p. 154. "When the expedition reached Karnal, the local Zamindar Gajpat Singh loyally waited on the prince and was forced to promise a tribute of two lakhs."—*Ibid*, p. 175.

Page 60. ". . . . *bad success of the English troops*"—refers to the retreat of the Bombay army and the Convention of Wadgaom.

Page 62. ". . . . *a hardy soldier, and a bold adventurer*"—Polier's letters to Ironside in 1776, contains interesting particulars about Najaf Khan. "You thought Nujhaf Khan had as a soldier something of the gentleman in him ; but had you seen him without the veil which this gentry wear before their "Sardars Englese," when they feel themselves immediately under their thumb, you would have known that he cannot have the smallest pretentions to the last, and

very little to the first of these qualifications. Yet I will not deny but he has some good qualities, and to them alone is he indebted for the figure he makes at present. His perseverance is unparalleled ; his patience and fortitude in bearing in adversity, the reproaches and impertinence of his rabble is admirable. . . . As for his lying, was it a thing quite natural to a Hindusthanee, I should be tempted to think necessity obliged him to it ; for he has too much bashfulness, or call it what you please, to refuse anyone point blank to his face ; and too much politeness to send any one away dissatisfied with him. This makes him lie and promise, although he does not intend to perform and by that means few or none go from him discontented. . . .—*Asiatic Annual Register,* 1800, Miscellaneous Tracts, pp. 33-34. See also Appendix.

Page 63. *Affrasiab Khan*—Mirza Najaf's slave and lieutenant, became Mir Bakshi after Najaf Khan's death, was murdered in 1784.

Page 66. *Maildarny* (Mahaldarny). Mahaldar is the officer in charge of the seraglio. Mahaldarny is the feminine form.

Page 67. *"his aspect . . . . has a good deal of sweetness and benignity"*—Forbes met Shah Alam in 1785 and described him of "about sixty years of age, of the common stature and of a countenance bespeaking a placid and benignant mind ; with an air and deportment of habitual dignity tempered by much affability."—Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs* (2nd ed.), ii, p. 422.

An earlier account of Shah Alam II's Court has been left by a Frenchman named Louis-Laurent Doliby, Comte de Modave. He served in the French army in Germany and India and became the Governor of Madagascar. In 1774, he again came to India and after fruitless attempts to organise a French corps under the Emperor and later on under

the Nizam, died in Masulipatam in 1777. His manuscript is called *Le Journal du Voyage du Bengale a Delhy* from which Sir Jadunath Sarkar has translated a few extracts in the *Islamic Culture*, July 1937. Comte De Modave describes Shah Alam as "a prince with a sweet and good character who is wanting neither in spirit nor in intelligence. During the first years after his accession to the throne he applied himself to the affairs (of State) and seemed to promise that he would prove much better than his last predecessors. Whether he has a naturally weak spirit or whether the embarrassment of his situation has drawn him back, a universal carelessness seems to guide him at present. He has been seized with a sordid avarice which his situation would have rendered excusable if he had not gone beyond all hands. However, some persons who ought to know him better than I do have assured me that this carelessness is affected and covers big plans which to their knowledge were going soon (incessament) to show themselves." Comte de Modave describes Furkhanda Bakht as "a great reader of books who "having collected a large number of Arabic and Persian books. . . . passes almost all his time in turning over their pages." Akbar Shah is mentioned as his father's favourite son who was "much better treated than the two elder ones."

Comte de Modave also gives a picture of the poverty of the imperial court. "The Court has no magnificence at all. The pompous spectacle of the audience of Aurangzeb which Bernier has described for us with so much pleasure and exactness has been replaced by the strictest parsimony which is born of real poverty and not of a weakening of the taste for external pomp. I have seen these public ceremonies which have no magnificence and majesty at all. The Emperor, the courtiers, the furniture of the palace all recall to us a real indigence. Finally

with the exception of the external respects we find nothing that conforms to the idea which the former narrative gives us about the riches of the Court of the Great Mughal." For a picture of the court, see also Kaye, *Life and Correspondence of Metcalfe*, i, pp. 343-44.

Page 70. *Jahandar Shah.*—In April 1784, he fled from Delhi and took shelter in Lucknow. He had an allowance of five lacs of rupees per annum from the Nawab-wazir at the request of Hastings. He died in Benares on 31 May 1788, aged about 39 years. The narrative of his flight written by him was published in the Appendix to Hastings's *Memoirs relative to the state of India*. Lord Valentia paid a visit to Jahandar Shah's widow and children. Valentia, *Voyages and Travels*, i, p. 97.

Page 70. "*murder of . . . . Alumguir Sanny*"—Alamgir II was murdered by his minister Ghazi-ud-din at Firoz Shah Kotla on the 29th November 1759, and a great-grandson of Aurangzeb was placed on the throne. In October 1760, he was set aside in favour of Ali Gahar.

Page 70. "*Gazy odin Khan's flight*"—(Imad-ul-mulk) "was the son of Ghaziuddin Khan Firoz Jang, the son of Nizam-ul Mulk Asaf Jah. His original name was Shahabuddin . . . . was appointed Amir Ul Umra by the Emperor Ahmed Shah of Delhi with the title of Imad Ul Mulk Ghaziuddin Khan". He later on blinded Ahmed Shah and assassinated Alamgir II. Beale, *Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, p. 143. ". . . . report of Ahmad Shah Durani's invasion spread among the people. Imadulmulk in fear of his life saw no other means of safety than in seeking the protection of Suraj Mal, and accordingly departed without delay for that chief's territory." Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, viii, p. 243. Before Shah Alam's arrival at Delhi Ghazi-ud-din left the city and took shelter with the Marathas in

Malwa. In February 1780, Goddard found him at Surat. He then went to Mecca and travelled in Kabul and Kandahar. He returned to Multan and finally settled down in Bundelkhand under the protection of Ali Bahadur son of Shamsher Bahadur. Ghaziudin died in 1800.—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, xlvii, pp. 129-30.

Page 70. *"Such is the heir apparent"*—Jahandar Shah did not succeed his father.

Page 71. *Ackbar Shah*—Shah Alam's heir, succeeded him in 1806, was grossly insulted by Golam Kadir and made to dance before him. Ochterlony refers to him "as imbecility personified . . . . and in the highest degree avaricious . . . ." Quoted in Thompson's *Making of the Indian Princes*, p. 173.

Page 73. *Mansour Ali Khan*—Superintendent of the emperor's household, was hostile to Mahadji Sindhia and helped Golam Kadir to occupy Delhi in 1788.

Page 74. *"Abdulahd Khan . . . will pass for a well-looking man"*—Comte de Modave's description of him will appear interesting. "He is an old man venerable by reason of his white beard, the politeness of his manners and his spiritual and engaging demeanour. The nobility of his deportment saves him from being disfavoured by a knot (dragon) which covers nearly all his left eye. This Nawab enjoys the Emperor's absolute confidence and is without a rival."—*Islamic Culture*, July, 1937.

APPENDICES

It has been said in the Introduction that Hill's *European Manuscripts in the India Office Library* (Vol. 11. Part I, Orme Collection) mentions four manuscripts written by Polier. Of these, three documents, Nos. 91 (17) to 91 (19), are printed below. The fourth, 91 (20) is a copy of the "Treaty between the Hon'ble East India Company and the Mahratta State at Poorunder. March 1st 1776".

I

Some Account of the celebrated adventurer, Sombre or Sumroo, July 4th 1776. [91. 17].

Sombre is an Alsatian born at Strasburg originally a carpenter or as some say a butcher. He came to India about 30 years ago in the French sea service as a carpenter ; from which he soon after entered into the military as a private soldier and was raised to the rank of serjeant in which he continued till the breaking out of the last war and was stationed at Dacca. The French Factory there having dispersed at the taking of Chandernagore, Sombre, amongst the rest, left that place and went to seek his fortune. He entered into service with various country Powers in different parts of India and in the latter part, I think, with the Purneah Nabob where with various turns, but in a low condition, he remained unnoticed till the accession of Cossim Ali to the Bengal Musnud. The encouragement Cossim Ali gave to such as were capable of disciplining troops after the European mode, particularly if they were French subjects, soon drew Sombre into his service, where he was not long before he gained favour by his assiduity, and the care he took to form the troops that were entrusted to his charge. He had soon a separate command ; he long remained, however, undistinguished for anything except the infamous action, in which he treacherously, and in cold blood, to the dishonour of the European name butchered our officers confined at Patna, in consequence of Cossim Ali Cawn's orders, after

this noble job had been proposed and refused by several of his Hindostan officers. From this time may be dated Sombre's rise and power. Cossim could not but place confidence in a man so obedient to him ; of course he became a favourite and was well rewarded for his villainy. All this however, did not afterwards prevent Sombre's observing that Cossim's fortune was irretrievable and he accordingly began to secure himself with Shujah Dowlah, into whose service he entered with the greatest part of the troops under his command, sometime after Cossim had taken refuge with that Prince, having previously compelled his worthy master to pay every rupee he was in arrears with his party which little by little he had gained over to himself. From this period he became independent and remained with Shujah Dowlah, till the latter's treaty with the English made it necessary for him to be dismissed. Shujah Dowlah meant to discard him unpaid, but that would not do. Sombre surrounded his begum and women in the Rohilla Country and made her pay all arrears before he would move off. He then went into the Jatt's service from which on some discontent he removed into the Jaynagar Rajah's country where however he did not stay long. He returned to the Jatts and remained with them while they could pay him. After which he was invited to this Court and well received, tho afterwards treated in such a manner as to engage him to join with Najaff Cawn with whom he has been ever since. His party is not very considerable. Three Battalions of Sepoys and about 200 horse compose it ; but he has a good train of artillery, 14 Guns well mounted, well served and amply supplied with everything necessary. As to his capacity and character, Sombre is illiterate to the full extent of the word. He can neither read nor write, but when necessary makes his mark. He is however versed in the Persian and Moorish tongues both of which he speaks fluently and accuratey enough. He is, as may be judged from his conduct at Patna, of a cruel and merciless disposition, several instances of which he has given since in the exertion of what he thought justice and authority, but which could be called by no other name than bloody acts. He is reputed cowardly, of course not over scrupulous. As to the fair side of

his character, he is a plain man both in his dress and equipage and way of life, not disowning or attempting to conceal his mean origin and the humble state in which he has formerly been. But Sombre's principal merit is his prudence, it is that which has hitherto kept his party entire and unbroken in the several engagements he has been in and where he alone almost sustained the whole brunt of the action, and which in all likelihood, will preserve him hereafter ; he has indeed an uncommon share of discretion and may also be allowed some military merit. He is much afraid of the English ; he dreads their very name and not without reason I think. This makes him ever keep upon his guard. No person can enter or approach his camp without being stopped and examined. In short, his whole deportment shows he is under apprehensions lest he should be seized and delivered up. On that account he is very loth to divide his forces, particularly since the English army is come so near where he is. This circumspection, spite of his prudence has brought him into another difficulty from which in the end, he may find it hard to extricate himself. He will not take from Nujuff Cawn any other subsidy for his troops than ready money. Nujuff is not very forward in his payments, he is actually ten months in arrears with Sombre, and the latter four months in arrears with his own party. If Sombre would accept of a district, which Nujuff Cawn has more than once offered him, from the rents of which he might get what is sufficient to pay himself his monthly allowance (which is now rated at 65,000 Rs. all included) everything would go well with him ; but his suspicious temper will not allow him to do it; it might oblige him to divide his forces and perhaps give an opportunity which Nujuff Cawn would not miss, of seizing him, and thereby making his court to the English. He will, therefore, have nothing to do with assignments. But the alternative is full [?] as bad, for he will find it a difficult point to oblige Nujuff Cawn to pay him in ready money, and danger would attend his using force to make him do it. Such is briefly the state and character of that adventurer. He is moreover entirely adopted the manners and customs of the country ; he wears the Mogul dress, has a Zenanah, etc., and has absolutely dropt all thoughts

of returning to Europe. He is about 56 years of age and has an only son about 12. In general, I find Sombre is neither liked nor admired in this country, tho his strength is sufficient to ensure him consequence and respect from all who may want his services or are weaker than he is.

NOTE

In the *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1800, extracts of letters from Polier to Colonel Ironside were published and later reprinted in the *Bengal Past and Present*, 1914. This document is almost a copy of an extract. There are, however, some minor differences and this manuscript seems to be the draft which was subsequently revised. Hill adds a note that "this account appears to have been furnished by Colonel Ironside to Orme, being almost word for word the same as that given by Major Polier in a letter to that Officer".

II

A view of the present Situation of the Emperor Shah Allum and the Territories round Delhy remaining in his possession, with some account of a Sect of People not long since appeared, called the Seiks and the condition of Cossim Ali Cawn. July 28th, 1775. [91. 18].

The king's domains are bounded on the north, N. W. & W. N. W. by the Seeks ; to the N. E. and within the Doab Zabita Chan possesses a large tract of country which heretofore belonged to the King, but is now by the late Treaty, finally made over to him. To the eastward the King's territories join those of Oud ; and on every other side they are encircled as it were by Nujuff Chan. Each of these different Powers may be said to acknowledge the King's title, and address him accordingly. But they all alike seem bent to suppress these, and instead of tendering him either assistance or support, think of nothing else than how to purloin from him and reduce him to distress. Even Asaf al Dowlah notwithstanding his outward show of succour, by sending his General Letafut with a body of troops to this capital is no exception ; nay in my opinion the vain Parade of such assistance absolutely confined as it is to the inside of Delhy, is worse than the rest and seems rather intended as an insult than an aid. But this is not to be wondered at, it is the natural consequence of the King's weakness, which is not limited to his power, but also extends to his genius and spirit, far different at present from what it was when only Shahzada. The indulgence of his inactive life while at Allahabad and since his return here, has absolutely effiminated him, and rendered him unfit for any action or decisive resolution. The entire trust of all his affairs are placed in the hands of his minister Abdullah Chan, whose abilities as a financier are uudoubted great, but who is in no degree equal to the task, I will not say of restoring the Empire, but even of keeping possession of the scraps that are left.

Nujuff Chan, who originally owes everything to the King and by whose assistance he began to raise himself and subdue the Jauts might, if he had pleased, have prevented, or put a stop to the late disasters occasioned by Zabita Chan's rebellion, and the defeat of the King's troops ; but he has viewed the destruction of his master without so much as sending a man to his aid or interfering by his mediation ; nay on the contrary it may well be presumed he has been under-hand adding fuel to the fire. Besides that he is ever, under some pretence or other, laying his hands on the King's domains, some parts of which are absolutely encircled within his own territories ; and he either protects the Zamindars in their revolts, or else absolutely takes the revenues to himself. All this, however, is done without entirely throwing off appearances. The mask of submission and allegiance is still kept up in letters, messages and, etc., tho' it is not difficult to perceive that even this little only holds by a thread, and that all in general conclude in looking on the King's authority and dignity to be no better than a phantom and a shadow. This in the Seeks is not extraordinary ; but in Nujuff Chan it shows to what length ambition will drive a man, and confirms me in the opinion that gratitude was never the growth of India.

[Nujhaf Khan dreads the English ; but they are rather distant at present : were they nearer, he would act very differently ; or even were they to talk to him in a proper tone, I am convinced he would think a little seriously. At present he is amusing the Council with letters of protestation, of his inclination and intention to dismiss Sombre, and to secure him; but I am much mistaken if he is in earnest. He has as yet been only entreated, and while the Council address him in that strain, Nujhaf Khan will laugh at them in his sleeve, and keep Sombre. Let them speak seriously, and let the brigade but cross the Ganges, and mark whether Nujhaf Khan does not become as humble and submissive as he is now supercilious and insolent. It is the only way of acting with Hindustanees.

[I have been prolix on this subject, that you may know hereafter what trust to put in Nujhaf Khan, or any other

Omrah not directly under the immediate protection of the Company ; for they are all alike.

[You thought Nujhaf Khan had, as a soldier, something of the gentleman in him ; but had you seen him without the veil which these gentry wear before their "Sardars Englese", when they feel themselves immediately under their thumb, you would have known that he cannot have the smallest pretensions to the last, and very little to the first of these qualifications ; yet I will not deny but he has some good qualities, and to them alone he is he indebted for the figure he makes at present. His perseverance is unparalleled ; his patience and fortitude, in bearing, in adversity, the reproaches and the impertinence of his rabble, is admirable. This keeps up his followers ; he amuses them with promises, and the charms of hope and fair words. They have the privilege of finding fault with his conduct even to his face, of advising him what to do, and, in short, even to the lowest Mogul in his retinue, they seem to treat him more as an equal than a superior. All this he bears with great fortitude, and even good humour ; and he is liked for it by his people, though they serve him very badly, it must be acknowledged. As for his lying, was it a thing quite natural to an Hindustanee, I should be tempted to think necessity obliged him to it ; for he has too much bashfulness, or call it what you please, to refuse any one point-black to his face; and too much politeness to send any one away dissatisfied with him. This makes him lie, and promise, although he does not intend to perform, and by that means few or none go from him discontented. Apropos of his lying : A certain Ressaladar of his, whom he had often deceived, came one day to the Darbar : and Nujhaf Khan having asked him, what news? The other answered, "Not much, only a merchant is just arrived with four cart-loads of lies, for the use of Mirza Khan." He, with great good humour, said, "Is that all. Why it is only as much as I can expend in a day." This good nature helps his interest much. But if he kept fewer troops, paid them better, and made himself more respectable, there is no doubt but he could do a great deal, and that he would soon grow more and more powerful. As for his present army every one directs and

commands but none obey it ; and, by keeping more forces than he can pay, he is always *"Monsieur d'Argent Court."*]

As for the Seeks that formidable aristocratical republick, I may, safely say it is only a defenceless state such as this. It is in fact a Hydra. Each Zemindar from the River Attock to the city of Hansy-Hissar and to the Gates of Delhy, who lets his beard grow, cries Wah Gurroo, eats pork, wears an iron bracelet, drinks bang, abominates the smoking of tobacco and can command ten horsemen, sets up immediately for a Sikh Chief, and as far as in his power aggrandizes himself at the expence of his weaker neighbours ; if Hindoo or Musalman so much the better, if not, even amongst his own fraternity will he seek to extend his influence and power ; only with this difference in their intestine divisions from what is seen every where else, that the husbandman and labourer in their own districts are perfectly safe and unmolested, let what will happen round about them.

From this small sketch it may be easily conceived that the Seeks are much less formidable than they are represented. It is true that they all join together when invaded, as was the case when Abdallah passed through their country. But notwithstanding they had assembled an immense body of cavalry, extremely well mounted, yet they never presumed to make a single charge on the Durany army or even to send out detachments ; and considering their irregularity, and want of discipline and subordination, it was well for them, I think, they did not. They satisfied themselves in making a kind of Hussar war of it, cutting of stragglers and intercepting provisions. In this they excel. To say the truth they are indefatigable, mounted on the best horses that India can afford, each carries a matchlock of a large bore, which they handle dexterously enough, and with which they annoy considerably, avoiding at the same time going in large bodies or approaching too near. Such is their way of making war, which can only appear dangerous to the wretched Hindosthan troops of these quarters, who tremble as much as the name of a Seek, as people used to do, not long ago, at the mention of a Mahratta. But what is most to be admired is that those Seek chiefs whose territories border

on the King's, were but very lately Zamindars of the Jatts and of their caste or tribe, under which denomination had they remained, no one would have thought of them; but now that they have put on the iron bracelet, fifty of them are enough to keep at bay the whole battalion of the King's forces, such as they are. This shows the force of prejudice and the value of a military reputation. Such are the immediate neighbours of the King.

[Five hundred of Nujhaf Khan's horse dare not encounter fifty Seik horsemen ; and yet the last are as despicable a set of creatures as any that can be imagined. On the whole, was it not for Sombre's party, and Letafet's forces, Nujhaf Khan would not be able to stand his ground half an hour; and yet this is The Mighty Chief !]

* About eight months ago he possessed a territory which exclusive of jaghiers afforded him annually a revenue of fifty lacks ; this is now, from the defeat of his troops by Zabita Chan, very much diminished, and truly it is hard to say now what it amounts, so precarious are collections in these parts when not enforced by arms.

* The income being so uncertain and trifling, and the administration so vicious, it is no wonder if his troops are in a bad state, the few he has now left cannot indeed, be worse than they are ; without order, discipline or subordination, no service whatever can be got from them and it is even with the greatest difficulty they can collect the revenues of those districts which have been assigned over to them for their pay.

* Two mutilated Battalions and a few straggling Companies are now all that is left for Shah Allum's defence and it is certain the whole is not equal two of our Grenadier Companies ; as for the two Battalions, which were given to the King on his departure from Allahabad they have been disbanded and sent to the right [?] about sometime ago. Their mutiny and insolence had arisen to such a pitch as rendered that step absolutely necessary and as no service could be expected from such troops, I think it was both prudent and proper, though I am pretty certain other motives concerned in their dismission.

* The two Commandants by a well-judged coalition of their interests kept up a kind of independence of the minister, who could not without vexation for such a defection from his authority, but instead of going openly to work and reducing them to a new subordination by a well-timed exertion of power, he betook himself to raise divisions amongst the Subadars and supported them against their Commandants and one another ; this effectually put an end to all discipline and order, tho' without the minister's having gained any advantage by it, for the Commandants having still the greatest number on their side, soon reduced the other or turned them out, and this made the minister Abdullah anxious to get rid of them, which at last was affected, after they had forced from him every rupee of a arrears due to them. In short, such a scene of confusion and disorder as these troops presented, could not well be seen anywhere, and yet with such did this infatuated minister presume to make conquests, and bring his neighbours into subjection ; the consequence was such as might naturally be expected, they were totally routed and the event had well nigh been fatal to Delhy.

Cossim Ali Chan, after several adventures and flying from one place to another, has at last taken up his residence at Pulwull, a small town twenty coss from hence on the high road from Agra to Delhy. There, in a miserable tent, surrounded by a couple of tattered walls, does he with a suite of about fifty attendants drag a wretched life. He is very studious to keep up the appearances of misery and poverty, and this to prevent any attacks from robbers great and small. He has, I believe, a small pension from Nujuff Chan, tho' not openly, and he lives on that and on some effects which he produces every now and then to answer his wants.

Part of his time is taken up in dressing his own victuals (which office he trusts to nobody) and in his correspondence, and the rest is invariably dedicated to judicial astrology. By the stars does he regulate all his conduct, and he is fully persuaded that from their influence and from a due knowledge of it he will be enabled one day or other to remount the musnad either of Bengal or Delhy (no matter which) with ten fold

power and glory. [In that pleasing hope I shall leave him. It is not impossible that before long,some one or other will make away with him, in expectation of plundering his effects. His brother, or cousin, Boo Ally Khan, is here ; more, I believe, as a spy upon me and others, than for any thing else. However, I have kept hitherto so much on the side of indifference, that I believe he no longer suspects me as he did at first. So much for that hero.]

(Written afterwards)

[Cossim Ally Khan is at last dead and buried. His demise was at Delhi, on the 29th of the moon Rabyal Sany, that is, on the 6th of June, 1777. It is said he died in great misery, and that his last shawl was sold to pay for his winding-sheet. The King's people immediately plundered all his cattle and moveables and placed his women and children under confinement : however the whole was given up again at Nujhaf Khan's intercession, and two of his children are come to this camp under Nujhaf Khan's protection. I passed by them the other day. They are both young, one about 12, the other about 10 years, or perhaps less. They have a small tent, and one wall, rather the worse for wear, for their habitation; and one palankeen, once embroidered, for their carriage : however, they are decently clothed; nay, elegantly. I presume Nujhaf Khan, under the pretence of tuition and Patronage, will endeavour to discover if there is any thing concealed, and appropriate it to himelf if it is not done already. Various are the reports and conjectures relative to Cossim's fortune. Some say he had nothing left, not even barely subsistence ; while others are equally positive in asserting that he had still some valuable jewels, and bonds to an immense amount. I believe a medium should be followed in this, as in most controverted points ; however, this I know, that he had bonds, whether true or false I cannot tell, to a good amount in his possession. I have it from ocular authority. In passing by his children the other day, I could not help recollecting the having once, at Patna, being obliged to dismount from my horse, and wait a foot till

his retinue had passed me, before I was permitted to mount again, or to retire. I could have done the same by his children ; but I bear no malice, and besides he could not well have known it himself.]

NOTE

Hill refers to the *Asiatic Annual Register* 1800, "where a longer extract from Polier's letters is headed "Account of the King, of his Dominions, and of Nujhaf Khan". It will be seen that though certain portions are common, the India Office manuscript contains new matter but leaves out several lines published in the *Asiatic Annual Register*. Paragraphs which are not found in the *Asiatic Annual Register* are marked with asterisks, while portions which are left out in the India Office manuscript are printed within brackets.

III

Some account of the transactions in the Province of Oud from the 1st April to the end of June, 1776. [91. 19].

Muktar a Dowlah, Dewan to the Nawab of Oud, was perfectly well instructed, it seems, in the nature of the finances, and administration of the country, but he endeavoured, for his own advantage, to keep the Nawab unacquainted with the state of affairs. He placed his own disciples and apostles at the receipt of custom, filled the forms and publick charges, both honorary and official with his own adherents ; and by these means and by the sole disbursements in every department of expence, rendered the Nawab, in great measure, so dependent on him, that he could scarcely ever command a sum of 10,000 Rupees. Some persons, domestic in the court, intimating the restraint of his situation, at length, opened the Nawab's eyes, alarmed his pride, and perhaps his fears. He then began to express disapprobation at the minister's conduct, and frequently menaced him. As often, however, was he cooled and appeased, sometimes by the Dewan's submisson, at others by the intercession of the English Agent, who was much, they say, in his interests.

There was, at this period, in the Nawab's camp one Bussunt an Eunuch, a young person of a genius, naturally lively which, by long and free communications with Europeans, matured into knowledge, enterprise, and discernment. For his vivacity and intelligence he had been a remarkable favourite both of Shujah Dowlah and of the English officers. At the demise of his old master he lost, by dissentions with Muktar a Dowlah, the countenance of his son, much of his former influence at the Durbar, and had been degraded from the Command in Chief of all the Infantry to the command of six Battalions only. Now, however, he began to recover the Nawab's favour, the Dewan and he dismissed their resentments, and swore inviolable attachment on the Koran . . . .

"For if he swears, he'll certainly deceive thee."

To perfect the reconciliation, Bussunt gave an entertainment (the old Oriental device) to which the Dewan was invited. He went, they [sic] company sat several hours drinking and diverting themselves with dancing women, and Muktar a Dowlah being thoroughly intoxicated, retired to bed. No sooner was he asleep than two assassins entered the apartment, and with daggers dispatched him. Bussunt instantly ordered one of his prepared Battalions under arms and their cannon to be drawn out, whilst he himself mounted his horse, and rode to apprize the Nawab of the transaction. He presented himself before the Nawab with his sword drawn and communicated what had been done. The Nawab appeared a good deal alarmed, reproached him with the deed, and asked him if he came to murder him also. What reply Bussunt made is uncertain. Some say he taxed the Nawab as an accessory to the fact, and with having given him orders for the execution of it ; others aver that he only stared wildly and wistfully round about him, and not perceiving what he looked for seemed disappointed, and delivered up his sword in silence. At the instigation of the attendants present the Nawab immediately commanded him to be secured, the doors were closed and he was cut to pieces on the spot. One of his relations was wounded in his defence, but to little purpose, for the numerous assailants presently demolished him. While these extraordinary events passed within, Sadut Ali, a younger brother to the Nawab, came to the tents armed with his scymater and a pistol, and demanded entrance. Admittance was refused him upon which he instantly took horse and fled to Agra.

Whether the Eunuch took off Muktar a Dowlah by command or connivance of the Nawab, and was afterwards destroyed himself to prevent telling tales ; whether he killed the Dewan at his own peril, to wreck his private vengeance on him, or whether it were a counterplot framed from the Nawab's order to Bussunt and afterwards concerted with Sadut Ali, in order to raise him to the Musnad is yet ambiguous. Pretty certain it is, however, that Sadut Ali held clandestine correspondence both with Bussunt and Nujuff Chan, as well as with his brother's troops, and ascertain that he had in readiness, that day, a

remarkable fleet [of] horse borrowed of a Gossein Chief, and harcarahs stationed upon every road (except the way he really took) to teli the pursuers he was gone that route. It is confidently asserted too that the Nawab promised Bussunt to be present at his entertainment but changed his mind and staid away.

To these factions and intrigues may partly be ascribed, I apprehend, the late mutiny and uncontroulable spirit of the Nawab's Sepoys. With a view to support his declining interests it was natural enough for Muktar a Dawlah to propose the introduction of English officers, and for an English agent to second the motion of a minister to his liking. But every consideration whether of his country's welfare, or of his own dignity and consequence, might be a reasonable dissuasive to the Nawab from adopting such a measure ; and if he has really given underhand encouragement, as is surmised, to his Sepoys to disregard their English officers (for tho' dispersed in detachments, they continue an uninterrupted communication) it is a circumstance, I think, rather to be regretted than wondered at. An experienced officer escaped from these seditious people assures me that he predicted the unruly temper and untoward disposition of the troops, at the very era [?] of the commotions above recited, and that notwithstanding his own and the remonstrances of several other officers, against keeping so many Battalions together at Etawah at such a juncture, which gave them opportunity to cabal ; and against protracting their arrears of pay, they were nevertheless detained, their arrears not cleared off, and all the time allowed them to conspire together requisite for the purposes of defection.

I do not here mention either the particulars or tho [sic] event of the insinuations of those troops, the detail of both being comprehended in the accompanying Diary ,but proceed to a few reflections which seem naturally to result from the occasion.

The sense of our constituents, if I recollect right, has always been for the Nawab of Oud to cultivate his cavalry and to rely for infantry upon the English ; a political, and for ought I know a wise resolution. By their revocation of all officers in Mahomed Ali's employ, their opinion in this case, if I err

not, is still further confirmed. But omitting their notions in this point, so diametrically opposite to Bengal ones, how is it probable for five or six foreign officers (half of them ignorant of the language and unexperienced too in war) to discipline and superintend a couple of thousand troops, belonging to a Sovereign Prince, not very well affected to their nation, but totally averse from their personal service. With 20 Europeans to 700 Sepoys, with a form of penal laws perpetually in force, with an invariable discipline and economy, and with never failing pay, we find it still difficult to preserve our Battalions in tolerable order. It is found essentially necessary for this purpose to concede many indulgences to our Sepoy Captains, in order to strengthen their authority. Divested of these aids and encouragements, nor subordination nor good government can be expected. At first there was only one practicable expedient for constituting obedience and respect from the Nawab's troops towards the English Officers, I mean the breaking the old Battalions entirely, dispersing them, and then from the heap levying them anew.

The Captain would thus have had the arrangement of their own Corps ; the appointment of all officers (who would have owed their elevation to them alone) the advantage of beginning as they proposed to proceed (which would have removed the appearance of innovation) and by rewards and punishments of conciliating submsision and regard. Yet admitting the Nawab inclined to sacrifice such privileges to Foreigners (prerogatives which our own Kings are tenacious of) the number of English Officers is still too few to answer the intent, and the precariousness of pay is an obstacle never to be got over. Priority of rank, I should have supposed, also might have been considered in so important an object, instead of a very partial selection, in general, of young officers, nominated by mere favour, and principally by Caledonian recommendation ; but I do not dwell upon this particular, because I now despair of ever seeing merit or long service the allowed qualifications to a candidate for preferment.

At present the real strength of the Nawab's Battalions are totally unknown. The commandants use every artifice to

deceive the officers, refuse to part with their own Mutsuddies, who keep the rolls and accounts ; and thus receive pay for four times the number actually subsisting. Of what consequence such proceedings are in an army needs no deduction.

What benefit, or the reverse may accrue to these provinces from entertaining English Officers will be seen hereafter ; but I should conceive that one Mussulman Foujdar and two or three Christian ones collecting in the same district, could not prove very productive of emolument to the revenue. They will either understand one another if they are clever, or quarrel if they are fools. "Nihil est dictum" in this country where no sense of reputation restraints the natives to the just sense of their duty. I know beside from experience how impracticable it is to prevent people from getting access to the Durbar, from possessing the Nawab's ears, and how unlikely it is in the due estimate of human nature for people to refrain from improper confidence, where affluence and independence are the likely conditions of communication. To this you will say that it is wonderfully easy to presage perversity. As I judge only from the visions before me (and there are philosophers who justify the doctrine of immateriality) I readily allow that I may be mistaken ; but at present it appears to me that the Supreme have established here a Dictator and Proconsuls the first of which I had rather be in a lucrative view, than the Governor of Batavia, and any of the second, than an Ydeb-Heer. [?]

NOTES

Hill remarks that the document is written "in the same hand" as the previous one and "presumably by Major Polier". The first part of the manuscript describes the murder of Asaf-ud-Dowlah's minister Mukhtar-ud-Dowlah Murtaza Khan and the second half contains a note on the state of Nawab's army and the desirability of appointing British officers. Murtaza Khan's murder is briefly mentioned in Irwin's *Garden of India,* but this document gives a detailed description and refers to the part played by the Nawab's younger brother Saadat Ali in the conspiracy.

There was, however, no direct evidence against Saadat Ali and the British Government evidently believed in his innocence. But his flight was looked upon with suspicion. Lord Valentia, who visited Oudh in 1809, found it necessary to add that "no proof was ever brought against Saaadat Ali. . . . His flight cannot justly be considered as such. . . ." This paper does not help to prove his innocence. On the other hand it throws some suspicion on his conduct. The reader will observe that Polier probably remembered his own career when he wrote that he despaired "of ever seeing merit or long service the allowed qualifications to a condidate for preferment". The construction of the closing sentences is faulty and the meaning is obscure at places.

IV

NOTE ON THE PICTURE

John Zoffany came to India in 1783 and stayed for a few years at Lucknow. His well-known pictures in India included a portrait of Mrs. Hastings, "Tiger Hunt in the East Indies", the "Embassy of Hyderbeck" and Colonel Mordaunt's Cockfight". The last picture which appears in Hill's *Life of Claud Martin* and the *Bengal Past and Present*, 1909, is reproduced in this book. It shows Asaf-ud-daulah greeting Colonel Mordaunt, Colonel Martin, the artist himself and many other distinguished personages including Colonel Polier (marked) who stands at the back of the picture. Colonel Gilbert Ironside's comment on Polier's appearance may be remembered in this connection. He describes Polier as "uncouth, being a true prototype of Sir John Mordaunt's perspective of Rochfort and his address ungainly. . . . ." (Kaye and Johnston, *European Manuscripts in India Office Library*, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 7-12).

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